

## Survey and Research Report

On The

### St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery



**The St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery**

1. **Name and location of the property:** The property known as the St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery is located near the northwestern corner of Colony and Sharon Roads in Charlotte, North Carolina.
2. **Name address and phone number of present owner of the property:** The owner of the property is:



5. **Current Deed Book references to the property:** The most recent deed to this property is recorded in the Mecklenburg County Deed Book 16228, page 124. The tax parcel number is 177-092-06.
  
6. **A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Hope L. Murphy.
  
7. **A brief physical description of the property:** This report contains a brief physical description of the property prepared by Hope L. Murphy.
  
8. **Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400:**
  - A. **Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance.** The Commission judges that the property known as The St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following criteria: 1) The St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery is a locally large and well-preserved burial site of African Americans that contains graves dating from roughly 1868 until about 1926; 2) the St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery is located in an otherwise highly-developed section of Charlotte and is the one of the few reminders of the rural farming community that once stretched along this section of Sharon Road; and 3) the St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church cemetery is the only surviving remnant of St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church, a Christian congregation that established its own house of worship in response to the newly-gained liberation of African Americans from bondage.
  
  - B. **Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:** The Commission contends that the physical

description that is included in this report demonstrates that the St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery meets this criterion.

9. **Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes “historic property.” The current appraised value of the 1.0164 acres of land is \$318,700. There are no improvements on the property. The property is zoned R-17MF.

**Date of preparation of this report:** April 8, 2004

**Prepared by:** Hope L. Murphy

## **Historical Overview**

One can best appreciate the cultural significance of the St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery by examining the plight of African Americans in Mecklenburg County in the years immediately preceding and following Emancipation. In 1860 slaves accounted for approximately 40% of Mecklenburg County’s population. These bondsmen and bondswomen tended, unlike those in Virginia and South Carolina coastal regions, to live on small plantations, and the slave owners in Mecklenburg County most often owned a relatively small number of bondspeople. About twenty-five percent of the white population of Mecklenburg County held African Americans as slaves, the majority of whom worked as farmhands or domestics, while a small minority labored in the County’s gold mines. In 1860 only 139 free blacks lived in the Charlotte.

Whites placed onerous controls on free blacks and enslaved blacks during the decades leading up to the Civil War. Slaves were barred from the streets after

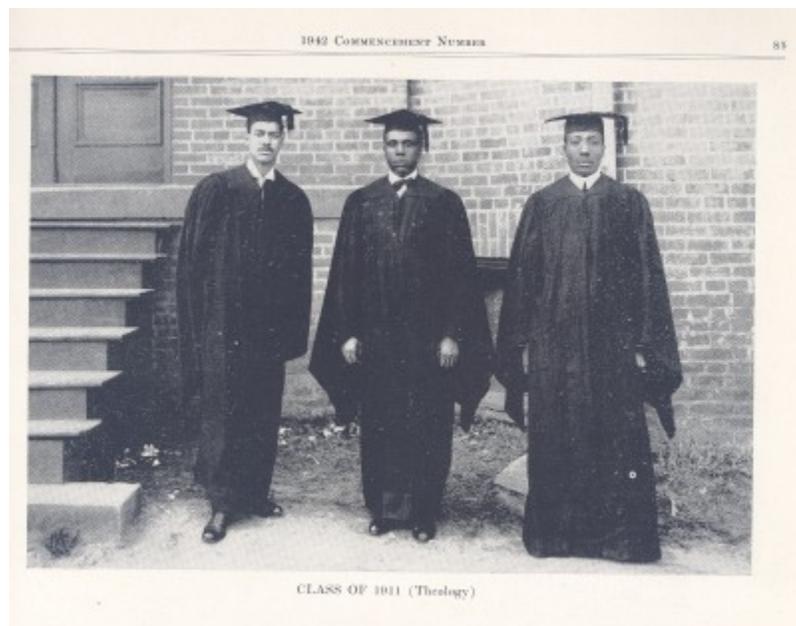
9:30 p.m., were not allowed to buy or sell liquor, and could not assemble without the expressed permission of the mayor or town commissioners. Free blacks were limited both by local and state codes, including the Free Negro Code of 1830, which attempted to prevent free blacks from having contact with both slaves and abolitionists, restricted their movement into and out of the state, and forbade whites from teaching bondpeople to read and write. By 1835 the North Carolina General Assembly had also stipulated that free blacks could no longer vote. Charlotte's City commissioners placed severe restrictions on local free blacks and enslaved blacks. The minutest details of black life were circumscribed. For example, blacks, free and slave, were prohibited from smoking, carrying weapons, and from being employed as clerks or retailers. In sum, whites attempted to prevent African Americans from obtaining even the most rudimentary sense of independence and self-worth in the pre-Civil War era.

After the Civil War, newly-freed blacks relished the opportunity to build families not subject to white control and churches that were similarly independent. Kathleen Hayes, a freedwoman, railed against the practice of seating African Americans in the balcony of Charlotte's First Presbyterian Church and called upon the black members of the congregation to "come out of the gallery and worship God on the main floor." The Northern Presbyterian Church responded to such urgings by establishing the General Assembly's Committee on Freedman on June 21, 1865, which sent 40 white missionaries and teachers to the South.

These teachers and missionaries faced many difficulties, including inadequate funding and rejection and hostility at the hands of many of the local whites. Undaunted, preachers like Reverend S.C. Alexander came from Pittsburgh to help Kathleen Hayes and other disaffected blacks establish Seventh Street Presbyterian Church, now First United Presbyterian Church. Alexander joined with fellow whites Sidney Murkland and Willis L. Miller in October 1866 to create the Catawba Presbytery, the first all-black Presbytery in the United States. These courageous men labored tirelessly to assist African Americans in creating several churches in Mecklenburg County – including McClintock Church, Murkland Church, Woodland Church, and St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church. These newly-founded congregations provided places of worship for those African Americans who wanted to remove themselves from their former white-controlled churches because of the demeaning treatment accorded black members there. Black congregants in white-controlled churches were listed separately on membership rolls, were forced to sit in separate sections, and were denied leadership positions.

Another primary need among freedmen was education. In response, the Committee on Freedmen began to establish primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges. Alexander and Miller helped to launch Biddle University, which was founded for the expressed purpose of “training of colored preachers, catechists and teachers of their own race.” Catechists, in this period, were candidates for the ministry. They were often older men with little or no formal education. Many walked from the 14 neighboring African American Presbyterian Churches, like St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church, that eventually arose in the area. They often traveled a distance of 5-10 miles each way, from the churches where they performed duties, in the absence of more formerly trained ministers.

Biddle was named for Mrs. Henry Biddle of Philadelphia who made a donation to the school in the name of her husband who was killed in the Civil War. Biddle, which is now named [Johnson C. Smith University](#), has been a cornerstone of the intellectual, social, and spiritual life of Charlotte’s African-American community. It has also had remarkable regional influence on the Presbyterian Church. A survey conducted in 1970 found that 60 percent of Black Presbyterian clergy in the Southeastern United States were Biddle/Smith graduates. Biddle would provide at least one of the ministers at St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church. He was Rev. Hercules Wilson, a 1911 graduate of Biddle Theological Seminary. St. Lloyd Presbyterian, as a small country church, was most likely Wilson’s first assignment. Later he would serve at the larger and more socially prestigious Woodlawn and Brooklyn Churches.



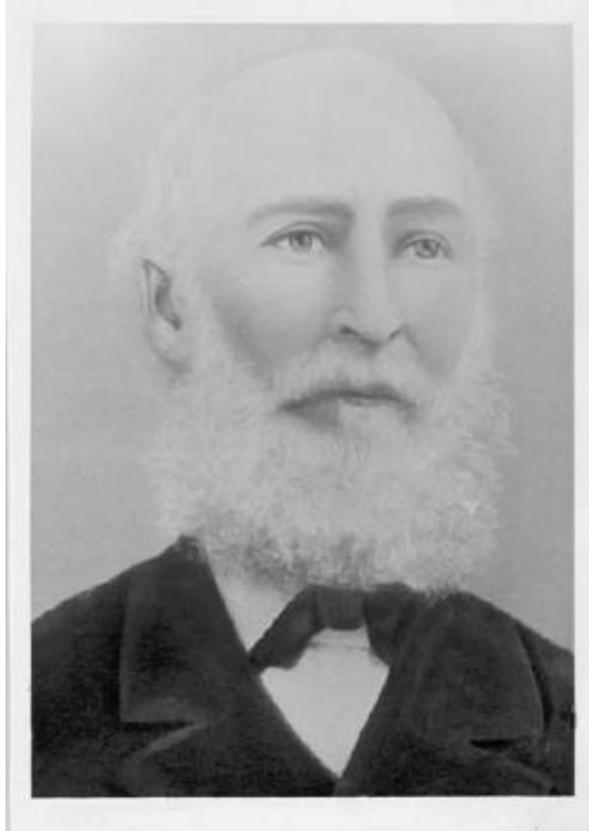
**Rev. Hercules Wilson (Far Right)**

## **The Founding of St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church**

**In October 1867 a group of African American members of Sharon Presbyterian Church appeared before the Church Elders. According to the minutes of that Session, these black members requested “advice and aid in building a house of worship for the colored people.” Though the names of the petitioners, or the church they wished to establish, are not in the Sharon Presbyterians minutes, it is believed that these African American members were the subsequent founders of St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church.**

**These former slaves, like others all around them, sought to define their freedom within their own institutions and houses of worship. Reverend Willis L. Miller, aforementioned as one of the founders of the Catawba Presbytery and Biddle University, helped the charter members of St. Lloyd Presbyterian establish their new church in the Sharon community. Miller requested that the Elders of Sharon Presbyterian Church dismiss without censure the African Americans who wished to leave. Miller’s request was granted during the Session meeting on October 20, 1867, with the following words:**

**“It is resolved by this Session that the names of all those colored members, who have gone into this aforesaid organization, be other (sic) are hereby, omitted from the Roll of Members of this Church without censure, with the prayer that the Great Head of the Church may go with and bless these our colored brethren in their new church relations.”**



**Rev. Willis L. Miller**

Photo courtesy of the Inez Moore Parker Archives & Research Center, Johnson C. Smith University

**On February 18, 1868, five trustees of St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church signed a deed to purchase one acre of land in Sharon Township from Jonathan K. Ray. This parcel of land was located about a mile north of Sharon Presbyterian Church, also on Sharon Road. The diamond-shaped piece of property was purchased for \$25.00 for the purpose of erecting the congregation's first church building and for providing a burial ground. The deed stipulated that in the event of the dissolution of the church, ownership of the property would revert to the Catawba Presbytery. When St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church was founded, Sharon Road was dirt; and according to David Lockwood, a white long-time resident of the Sharon community, it was not a main thoroughfare but "led nowhere." Colony Road was then only a narrow dirt path that led to the farmlands behind the Church grounds.**

**In the "Jim Crow" era, St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church would have served many of the needs of its congregation. Most of those who attended St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church were poor and worked primarily as laborers, farmers, and domestics. With educational opportunities limited, many remained uneducated. When the Trustees of Lloyd sold the property in 1926, two out of five**

of the trustees were illiterate, as evidenced by their making their mark, in lieu of a signature. The harshness of lives of the church members is also evident from their causes of death. Many died early in life of diseases, like Pellegra (a vitamin deficiency) and lung ailments like pneumonia and tuberculosis, which are now largely curable.



**Rev. Hercules  
Wilson**

Much time would have been spent in the church, which served, as most country churches, black and white, as a place to receive spiritual salve in difficult times and as a social center for the community. David Lockwood and Mary Ruth Gibson, the latter also a white resident of the Sharon community, each fondly recount that his and her families would sit on their front porches in summer evenings and listen to the members of St. Lloyd Presbyterian singing hymns. C.C. Caldwell, Mary Ruth Gibson's brother, recounts that his father attended a wedding in the 1920's at St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church. The bride was Sara Alexander, whose father was an attorney. Tom Kirkpatrick, another white resident of Sharon, recounts with humor that Lloyd parishioner Lucinda Davis, who was in his family's employ along with her husband Walter, often lectured Kirkpatrick's father on how to be a better Christian.

When the Church property was sold to the Morrisons in 1926 the congregation moved to a new location in Grier Heights, on what is now Wendover Road. Grier Heights was, and still is, a primarily African American neighborhood. St. Lloyd Presbyterian's move from Sharon Township to Grier Heights is tangentially related to broader trends that were present in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County during the "Jim Crow" era. Neighborhoods that had for many years showed a "salt and pepper" pattern – where blacks and whites lived,

worshiped, and worked in close proximity - became after Reconstruction increasingly segregated.

It is clear that in the half-century following the Civil War St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church was central to life in Sharon Township. In this rural area it provided spiritual guidance, acted as a social outlet for African Americans, and provided a forum for developing black leadership. It also served, in a time characterized by racial animosity, as a place of refuge, comfort, and encouragement for African Americans.

### **Architectural/Physical Description**

The St. Lloyd Presbyterian Cemetery is located near the northwestern corner of Sharon and Colony Roads in Charlotte, North Carolina. Once part of the rural township of Sharon, the area has now become one of the busiest and most sought-after areas for residences, shopping, and business. The St. Lloyd Cemetery is situated on a largely level, diamond-shaped one-acre lot, which extends along Colony Road to a set of apartment homes. Most of the parcel is covered with mature trees, except for the approximately one-half-acre that contains the graves; there younger trees grow, and the ground is covered with periwinkle. Periwinkle was a common ground cover used in older cemeteries. Its invasive root system prevents other weeds from growing, and its purple flower acts as a decorative ground cover. It is probable that the plants that now exist there are offshoots from those planted by the St. Lloyd Presbyterian Church congregants more than 150 years ago.



**Seventy-eight graves have been identified at the site. These depressions are about two feet wide and range in length from six feet to between four and five feet. Adults are interred in the larger depressions, and the smaller ones contain the remains of children. The graves, generally oriented from east to west, are located close to Colony Road and are grouped in what must be family burial plots. The graves at the site likely date from about 1868, when the church property was purchased, until roughly 1926, when the property was sold to Cameron and Sarah Morrison. The Morrises purchased the property as part of a larger parcel that would become part of Cameron Morrison's grand "gentleman's farm" named Morrocroft.**

**Very few grave markers remain, and none has an inscription. The ones that do survive are field stones. Most likely some of the markers were fashioned from wood and have since deteriorated. There is anecdotal evidence that larger stone markers may have been in the cemetery but were later relocated. An explanation of any motivation behind such a move does not exist, since no graves were to be relocated and since the property was, by deed, to remain an undisturbed gravesite in perpetuity. It is not clear whether the Morrises agreed to maintain the cemetery. Mary Ruth Gibson recounts that as a child her brother C.C. Caldwell would compel her to visit the cemetery and help him pick the weeds that had grown up around the site.**

**There is no visible evidence of the church building remaining. As of this date it is unclear what happened to the church structure, though there is anecdotal evidence that it burned down. Residents of the area recount that the church was located approximately 200 yards from Sharon Road and faced northeastward, toward what is now uptown Charlotte. The church, according to David Lockwood, was a small, one-story wooden structure, with a simple bell tower in the front.**

[Click here to](#)

Dan L. Morrill, *A History of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*, Chapter 4. An on-line resource: [www.danandmary.com/historyofcharlotte.htm](http://www.danandmary.com/historyofcharlotte.htm). Ms Murphy produced this report as a

student intern. She is enrolled in the Public History Program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Janette Thomas Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White "Better Classes" in Charlotte, 1850-1910*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 21.

Ibid, 22.

Ibid.

Interestingly, Rev. Miller had, prior to his conversion, been a slaveholder, and had fought to maintain the institution of slavery. (Inez Moore Parker, *Historical Narrative, The Biddle-Johnson C. Smith University Story*, Charlotte: Charlotte Publishing, 1975 p. 94) D.G. Burke, "The Catawba Story 1866-1980: A brief History of the Catawba Presbytery. Sponsored by the Historical Committee of the Catawba Presbytery, United Presbyterian Church, USA, 1981". From the Inez Moore Parker Archives, Johnson C. Smith University.

*Biddle University Report of 1871*. From the Inez Moore Parker Archives, Johnson C. Smith University.

*Biddle University Report of 1869*. From the Inez Moore Parker Archives.

Greenwood, 44.

*Background and Status Survey United Presbyterian USA Black Ministers, Feb 1971*. The Inez Moore Parker Archives and Research Center, Johnson C. Smith University.

*Minutes of the Sharon Presbyterian Church Session, October 19, 1867*.

The prevalence of family names that appear both among black congregants at Sharon and congregants at Lloyd, along with the close ties between known members of Lloyd and living informants from Sharon, lead the writer to this conclusion.

*Minutes of the Sharon Presbyterian Church Session, October 20, 1867*.

The church has been called Lloyd and St. Lloyd's alternatively. Though all deeds are registered in the name of Lloyd Presbyterian, death records list the Church as St. Lloyd's.

Interview with David Lockwood – February 24, 2004.

Interview with Mary Ruth Gibson – February 19, 2004, and Lockwood Interview.

Interview with C.C. Caldwell – March 2, 2004.

Interview with Tom Kirkpatrick – February 24, 2004.

<http://danandmary.com/hisof charlottechap9new.htm>

Most of the names of those buried at Lloyd Presbyterian Church are not known; the following names were obtained from death certificate searches. Mecklenburg County only maintains death certificates from 1913 making research, using death certificates, prior to this date impossible.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>AGE AT DEATH</b>	<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>DATE OF DEATH &amp; CAUSE</b>	<b>DEATH CERTIFICATE NUMBER</b>
William McKee	63 years	Laborer	October 9, 1917  Edema of Lungs	#665
Eugenia Kirkpatrick	38 years	Domestic	July 11, 1918  Pellegra	#313
Carie Walker	About 18 years		December 23, 1918  Pneumonia	#47
Becky Sumple Walker	65 years	Laborer	July 7, 1920 Neuralgia of the heart	#114
Winiah Knox	57 years	Laborer	Mitral Regurgitation	#1005
Louise Campbell	11 months		March 17, 1921  Whooping Cough	#1158
Joe Mackey	48 years	Laborer	December 1, 1921  Cause Unknown	#280
Robert Harris	About 46 years	Farmer	December 5, 1921  Tuberculosis	#274
Robert Stewart	13 years	Farmer	January 18, 1922  Tuberculosis	#283
Walter Phiser	52 years	Farmer	June 4, 1922	#287

			Cause Unknown	
June Price	About 60 years	Farmer	November 16, 1922	#290
			Pellegra	
"Baby" Alexander	Stillborn		July 19, 1923	#207
Mamie Walker	42 years	Housewife	January 23, 1923	#153
James Harris	9 months		May 27, 1924 Colitis	# 268
Thomas Watson	7 years			
"Baby Boy" Price	Stillborn		January 21, 1926	

"An Archeological Reconnaissance of the Lloyd Presbyterian Church Cemetery: Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina." J. Alan May, August 1993.

May, p. 14.

C.C. Caldwell, recalled that as a child in the 1930's that as many as 30 headstones were still standing in the cemetery. Mr. Caldwell conjectures that the stones may have been stolen by vandals.

Mecklenburg County Deed Book 617, page 440.

Gibson Interview.