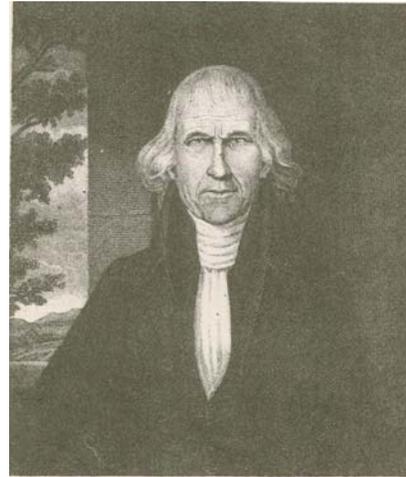


Experience, Labours, And Sufferings  
Of  
Rev. James Jenkins,  
Of the South Carolina Conference.  
Printed for the Author.  
1842.

Memoir of James Jenkins  
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in Memory of my Sister Victoria Dowling Beasley  
by Fannie Dowling Brown.

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James Jenkins was the son of Samuel Jenkins (1729-1780) and Elizabeth Britton (born 1741). The following was transcribed by Ben Burroughs from the above mentioned book. Comments in brackets, [ ], were added to help clarify.

Page 8

“I was born on the north side of Little Pee Dee, in the upper part of Britton’s Neck, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Nov., A.D. 1764. ...he [his father, Samuel Jenkins] moved up the river, and settled on the east side of Great Pee Dee, nearly opposite Port’s Ferry. While at this place, when about ten years old, I received my first religious impressions.”

Page 9

“It is true, that at the very time of my serious concern about my soul, my father and mother were members of the Baptist Church;...”

Page 10

“We seldom heard preaching in those days [circa 1774]. – There was but one church in the Neck [Britton’s Neck]; and it was only occasionally supplied by a Presbyterian minister [possibly a minister from Kingston Presbyterian Church in Kingston/Conway, whose earlier minister, Rev. William Donaldson (d. 1759), mentions the Presbyterian Church of Christ at Britton’s Neck in his Will]. I used to ride on the same horse with my father to meeting; but all that was said was as a sealed book to me, for I understood not the things that were spoken.”

Page 16

“My father belonged at this time [circa 1777] to the Neck company, commanded by Captain John Dozier, which was early called out...”

Page 17 & 18

“In the year 1778, as well as I remember, my brother Francis, being a bachelor, insisted on our moving down in the Neck, and living with him, as he had room and land enough for us all; accordingly, we did so. We were now in the midst of a neighbourhood of hot Whigs and warm friends of their country. But there was a body of Tories over Little Pee Dee, who were becoming very troublesome, constantly committing depredations on their neighbours; in consequence of this, my cousin John Jenkins, being the only Whig in that settlement, feeling his life to be constantly in jeopardy, took refuge in the Neck. By this time our family became quite large – father, mother, four sons, and one cousin: but it did not continue so long; for at the call of our beloved country, my brothers and cousin left us, and made the swamp their camp, and the battle-field their home. They, and all the Neck company, were now called out into the army, in which they continued, by intervals, until the close of the war. Meanwhile, our troublesome neighbours, taking the advantage of our unprotected condition, (for there were scarcely a half dozen men left in the Neck,) came down on a plundering expedition, and scoured out the settlement like a swarm of hungry Egyptian locusts. When I saw them coming to our house, I took refuge in the top of a tree about eighty yards distant, whence I could see all their movements, undiscovered. In this situation I was when they took the last horse we had on the place, and although large enough to carry a gun, I durst not open my mouth; for they would have shot me down with the same indifference that they would a squirrel or a crow.”

Page 18

“Soon after my father’s death [1780], the British, who were fortified in Georgetown, sent a flag and message to our men, who were at their redoubt, thrown up on the east side of Great Pee Dee, by order of Colonel Irvin.”

Page 19 [1780]

“On his [Merriot, a British officer] way to Irvin’s redoubt, he crossed Britton’s Ferry, and cousin Britton accompanied him to our house. Neither mother nor myself knew that he was a British officer until he made a remark that revealed the secret. Mother asked cousin Britton if it would be safe to send to Waccamaw for salt? to which Merriot replied, with an oath, “No, madam, for we have a great big thing there we call a galley.” Mother, mortified that she should have expressed a fear about the strength of our fort, in the presence of an enemy, and indignant at his reply, answered; “Sir, I suppose you think you have got so far back in the country that no one here ever saw a galley but yourself; I will have you to know, sir, that I have been as well raised as yourself.” Merriot, finding times were getting rather hot, attempted to apologize, as he picked up his hat to leave; but mother, turning to cousin Britton, said, in the presence of the officer who was retiring, “If you cannot bring any better company with you than this, you had better keep away.” When he [Merriot] got to the redoubt, he was taken prisoner and confined in Wm. Goddard’s house until the British relieved him; for Irvin, hearing that they were coming, vacated the fort.”

Page 19 & 20

“I do not remember any incidents worth recording, respecting my brothers, until after they joined Marion; which was soon after he retook our men near Nelson’s Ferry, and made prisoners of the British, the captain who ran up the chimney, and all. They continued with him during the war, bearing a part in nearly all of his skirmishes. This company was called “Marion’s Brigade;” some of whose engagements, especially those with which my brothers were connected, I will now notice.”

Page 20

[Mentions skirmishes at Black Mingo Swamp and Fork of Black River.]

Page 20

“The next attack deserving notice was at old Capt. Postell’s, on the branch of Pee Dee River. The British had taken him prisoner and carried him to Georgetown; his sons were with Marion; the fine large house on the premises had been seized and was now occupied by the enemy as a fortification, it being so convenient to obtain supplies for their army.”

Page 22 & 23

“The next engagement I notice, and a dangerous one too, was on Pee Dee, near Wrag’s Ferry. The British had sent a company of about fifty men for rice. While there, Pheuthey, with about forty men, was sent to take them.”

Page 23 & 24

“Another hot time they had near Georgetown, at Col. Alston’s, called “The Pens”. I think my brother, and perhaps Gabriel Marion, were on the picket guard when the Tories rode up; and upon being hailed by our men, the captain, advancing a little, said, “We are friends to King George:” which was no sooner uttered than the guard fired and wheeled to escape; but several were thrown from their horses and taken; my brother fell also, but recovered, and mounted again before they could seize him. The enemy pursued, and so close was the chase, they ran immediately up to Marion’s camp; and while wheeling to retreat, fell by our marksmen, like ripe fruit to the ground. It was a sad day to the Tories: several of our old neighbours (among whom was my father’s old blacksmith) were killed. But Marion suffered also; for they not only made prisoners of the men they took from us, but killed them in cold blood; particularly young Marion; his name alone was enough for them; he was shot down, it was believed, by one Sweat, who was overtaken by justice the same day, and shared a similar fate.”

Page 25, 26 & 27

“About this time, Watson started toward Lumberton, N.C., on a plundering expedition. I suppose he crossed at Britton’s Ferry, and came up through the Neck. He got to our house on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, about 9 or 10 o’clock, A.M. – Hearing he was coming, I went out on the swamp side, and got on the fence to see the company pass. The horse in front galloped up to the house, and prepared to camp. By this time, cousin John Jenkins rode up the hill, having been sent to reconnoitre by Col. Horry, who was in the back swamp. But he was soon discovered, and hither they came full tilt; my cousin requested me to

mount behind him, and off we galloped into the swamp. It seemed they were afraid to follow us, as they did not pursue far; perhaps, thinking that Marion was close by. – And now I was in an awkward condition. My cousin soon left me to join his company, and I durst not go home; but there, in the swamp, among the wild beasts I must stay, until these gentlemen Tories and fat-faced British pleased to leave. When they had gone, which was just before night, I came out of my hiding-place, and upon my return home, found that they had made sad havoc among the beebes, having killed no less than seven, which they skinned and left on the spot, because too poor for them. The garden was almost entirely destroyed. My mother had a considerable quantity of fine English peas; but they stood no chance before these hungry soldiers. They also took from the place two likely negro fellows.

Watson himself had, during his stay, taken up quarters in the house; and being in the presence of my mother, she asked him if he did not find it difficult to get from the Ferry to her house with the baggage; as the bridges were torn up? to which he replied, “No, madam, I never find any difficulty, when on British ground. Do you not believe, madam, the British will conquer the Americans?” “No, sir; I wish I was as sure of heaven as I am that the Americans will gain their independence; and I think, sir, you believe so too.” At this the colonel became quite angry and replied, “No! madam, I do not believe it.” “How many sons have you among the rebels, madam?” “None, sir: the king has rebelled against us, and not we against the king.” – “Well, madam, how many have you with Marion?” “I have three, sir; and I only wish they were three thousand.” “Send for them, send for them, madam, and let them take protection, marry wives, and settle their plantations.” “Will you stay, sir, and protect them?” “No, madam, indeed;” quite enraged, “it is enough for me to pardon them.” “Pardon them, sir! They have not asked it yet.” Cooling down a little, he asked her to take a glass of wine with him, to which through courtesy she consented. As she was in the act of taking the wine, he said, “Health to King George.” But it was her time next; and she retaliated, by saying, “Health to George Washington.” He made a wry face, but could not refuse. This over, Col. Watson resumed the conversation, by saying, “Well, madam, have you heard that Gen. Marion has joined Lord Rawdon?” “No sir, indeed I have not.” “Well, madam, it is a matter of fact.” “Sir, I don’t believe it.” “Why, madam, you might as well tell me, I lie.” “I don’t say you lie, sir; but I don’t believe it.” This vexed him again, insomuch, that he struck his tents and went a mile further, to John Ray’s, where he spent the night. The above conversation I had from my mother immediately upon my return to the house from the swamp, and heard her repeat it often afterward.

The next day, Watson and his men proceeded toward North Carolina in great glee, blowing their bugles as they went, until they heard that General Green was coming; when they turned about and made for Georgetown, in great haste, and with all possible silence. On their return, I narrowly escaped falling into their hands.”

Page 29 & 30

“A short time before the close of the war, I was called out under Col. Baxter, who had charge of a small part of Marion’s brigade. Our principal business was to guard the Neck against the invasion of Tories. We encamped first at Ray’s, (in the Neck.) From Ray’s we removed to Tarrel’s Bay, near Little Pee Dee; thence to the redoubt thrown up and occupied by Marion, opposite Port’s Ferry; thence, again, a few miles above the ferry, on the bank of the river. Here we remained until we heard the Tories had taken our boat freighted with rice, near the mouth of Black Lake [tributary on the east side of Great Pee Dee, in Horry County], which induced us to go in pursuit of them. When we got there, they would not stand to give us fight; but, while our men, in canoes, were going up the lake in search of the boat, they fired on them from the swamp, and wounded one of the company, Robert James. – From this place, Baxter detached a small company, and myself among them, with an express to Capt. Warden, at Star Bluff, on Waccamaw [above Kingston/Conway in Horry County], who was stationed there to guard that part of the country. From this place we had to carry a message to the army in North Carolina. On our way, we were obliged to camp in a Tory neighbourhood, where we expected an attack without fail. About day-break we heard our centry [sic] hail, “Who comes there?” and the reply, “A friend.” “Friend to whom?” bawled out the centry. “To King George,” said the other; when off went their guns, and into the camp ran our centries with great precipitation. Immediately we were ordered to form; so up we jumped, and bareheaded and undressed, we snatched up our guns, making ready for battle; but we could see no enemy; and soon found it was a false alarm, intended by the officers to ascertain whether their men could be relied on in the event of an engagement. In a few days we reached the army, and delivered our message. They had taken two noted Tories, who were to be executed the day we got there; but our captain being anxious to get home, would not stay for us to witness their execution.

When we returned home, we were discharged, there being no longer any necessity for our services in the field. Here that protracted, eventful, and bloody struggle, closed; and in view of the many horrible and intolerable evils that followed in its wake, I am prepared to pray, “Keep far our foes: give peace at home.” And, again, “From all pestilence, and famine, and war, good Lord, deliver us!”

After the Revolution - some of his writings dealing with his ministry...

Page 31

“Soon after the war closed my brother Samuel married, and I continued still to live in the Neck, sometimes with him, and then with my mother. This was a dark day indeed in this region of country: during the space of nearly ten years I do not remember to have heard more than two sermons.”

Page 85 [1798]

“I was appointed to Bladen circuit with brothers Wilson and Milligan. Brother Jackson was our presiding elder. My colleagues entered on their work at once, but I was detained at home a few weeks, having to fix a house for my mother. The circuit lay partly in North and South Carolina, extending from Long Bay to Cape Fear, and including

Kingston, now Conwayboro', Lumberton, Elizabeth, Smithville, and Old Brunswick court-house. There had been a small society formed on Cape Fear about the time of the war, by Philip Bruce, and, perhaps, O'Kelly, but the preachers had to leave, and in consequence the society was broken up, with the exception of three women, who were still firm in their Master's cause, though destitute of church ordinances.

Page 86 [1798]

“Seasons of refreshing were experienced at various places on the circuit, particularly at Conwayboro'. In this place there were many young people, the children of Methodist parents, and they were so clanned together it was difficult to make a breach among them; it seemed that young Durant (our Henry's father) was a sort of captain among them, in their wildness and fun; and we often said, if we could catch him, we should get all the company; so one day, while I was preaching on the worth of the soul, Durant's heart melted. I came down, and opened a door for members, when up came our captain with streaming eyes, and his lieutenant, young Wilson, just behind him; this broke the way, and in a short time we had all the young folks in the neighbourhood, except two.”

Page 95 & 96 [May 1800]

“On my return I had to lie by one day in consequence of hard and constant rain, and when I started I found nearly every river and creek overrunning. I had to cross on old bridges and floats, and frequently swam my horse by the side of a canoe. Cape Fear was truly dangerous. When I came to Pee Dee, within a day's ride of my appointment in the Neck, not being able to cross at the desired place, I went to the next ferry below, and started over, but the flat stranded on a sand bank, and finding no means of relief, I plunged my horse into the water, expecting him to swim; this, however, he did not, but the water ran over his back, and I was wet to my waist. In this condition I went to the church, where I found the congregation waiting, and without saying a word to any one, I commenced preaching in the name of the Lord. My subject was, “Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord;” and I suppose more were awakened that day than under any one sermon I have ever preached since.”

Soon after this a second society was raised here, and there has continued to be one ever since. Brothers Greaves, Ellison, and Richardson, were raised up in this society. I spent the night with brother Woodbury. Next morning a boy swam my horse across the lakes or creeks, and William (now General Woodbury) carried me across in a canoe. I talked to him about his soul until I supposed he became tired of it, when he upset the canoe, pretending it was accident. I did not mind getting wet so much as getting my books ruined.”

Page 101 [1801]

“After leaving this circuit [Bladen Circuit] I fell in with Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat at Richard Green's, near Kingston [Conway]. Their pastoral letters, giving me directions concerning my work, together with their advice and godly admonitions while we remained together, were of special benefit to me. Thence I went home, and I think attended a sacramental meeting on my way in Georgetown.”

Page 115

“Camden, South Carolina, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1802...

[In a letter to Bishop Asbury describing the particulars of several general meetings held at the Hanging Rock in Santee Circuit, Jenkins concludes with the following:]

...Brother Mead informs me, the work is still going on in Georgia. We have a revival in Anson, and the upper part of Santee. Brother Gassaway joined at one time nineteen, and at another seventeen. There is also a revival in Bladen [Circuit], at Kingston [Conway], and several other places.”

Page 196, 197 & 198 [1830]

“In the autumn of this year, by the request of some of my friends, I visited my native place. On Tuesday, as well as I remember, I reached the house of Richard Woodberry, who was class-leader of the society in Britton’s Neck. In the evening I walked down to the old church, that had been standing for many years, and went to prayer in it; for my mind was in a proper frame for reflection and devotion. To attempt a description of my feelings on that occasion would be vain. Memory, on swift wing, soon carried my back through a series of forty years. The circumstances connected with my joining the church in that very place were still fresh in my mind. I thought of the dangers I had encountered – falls from horses – exposures to the wild men of the forests, &c. – the privations and sufferings, both of body and mind, which I had endured – the many temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil – and the many happy seasons I had enjoyed; together with the awakenings and conversions that I had witnessed. I remembered, also, that few of my contemporaries – those that started for heaven when I did – were living. They were nearly all gone, while I, for some purpose, was left behind. In this retrospect I saw so much of the undeserved favour and mercy of God, my heavenly Father, that my soul was filled with gratitude and love. O! it was a weeping time.

The next day I rode down to the old place where I used to live in the time of the war. But “Old Time” had driven his ploughshare over all the place, removing the trees with which I had been acquainted, and indeed leaving nothing that seemed natural, except an arm of the swamp, called Mad Cap, running up between this place and that of an uncle’s. Here memory was busy again, while riding over the old fields, in which I had learned to plough, and over which I had so often rambled, killing birds, &c.; and where I had made two narrow escapes from falling into the hands of the British. But, above all, my feelings were most excited when I came to the family burying-ground. Here lay my grandfather and grandmother, my father and mother, two brothers, a sister, uncles and aunts, together with cousins: perhaps forty connections, first and last. It had been a plum orchard, but was now covered with the natural growth. I tried to designate the spot where my dear parents lay, but the effort was fruitless.

“God, their Redeemer, lives,  
And ever from the skies  
Looks down, and watches all their dust,  
Till he shall bid it rise.”

On the next day the camp meeting commenced near the church. Here I saw the children of some of my relations, who were gone. I think I tried to preach three times; once on Christian perfection, and this especially was one of the days of the Son of man: the shouts of victory were heard afar off. Several professed the blessing of sanctification.

Page 203 [1833]

“I went in company with brother Allison, and held a two days’ meeting at Lancaster Court-House. We stayed with Col. Witherspoon, who was very kind. I preached on Friday night, from, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate,” &c. After preaching I found out why the colonel wished me to preach: he said, that in 1796 I used to call at his grandmother’s, near Kingston [Conway], to rest, and always before leaving I had prayer, and prayed so loud, he ran off. I suppose he wished to learn whether I preached so loud as I used to pray. Having no church in the village [Lancaster] we preached in the court-house.”