

Religious Discipline and the Limits of Anti-slavery in Piedmont

North Carolina

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From Guilford County, North Carolina, in 1847, Methodist exhorter Daniel Wilson issued a call to the Allegheny Conference of Wesleyan Methodists in Ohio for assistance in organizing a circuit. Adam Crooks and Jesse McBride came. They preached, organized a few congregations, and covertly circulated abolitionist material. They operated for over a year before, in 1850, their mission had stoked the fires of proslavery sectionalism during the national debate over the Compromise of 1850. Convicted of distributing incendiary material by a Forsyth County jury and threatened at every turn with violence by proslavery mobs, both men judiciously left the state.¹ This Wesleyan episode contributed to Piedmont North Carolinians' reputation as chronic dissenters from the South's slaveholding course. Yet the Wesleyans and their southern sponsors failed to raise an actual anti-slavery or anti-planter movement. Why?

Recent historians have looked to the success of aristocratic hegemony or a failure of common people to form a class identity.² The Wesleyan episode evolved and escalated into a political incident between 1847 and 1851, but the *origins* of its social tumult and its ultimate limits may best be described from a religious context.

This paper examines how ordinary people used religious practice to establish and understand communal boundaries and the limits of acceptable social behavior, and thereby the limits of anti-slavery sentiment in Piedmont North Carolina.³

Paradoxically, denominations with antislavery tendencies had existed in peace with the mainstream pro-slavery congregations in Piedmont North Carolina for decades.⁴ People in the Piedmont reacted differently to the newcomers in 1847. The Allegheny Wesleyans, in two specific ways—the manner they exposed and dealt with sin, and in their competition for souls—had violated the boundaries of religious practice and social behavior in ways the locals had not, thus earning the enmity of the larger Guilford community.

Key to my argument is an expanded definition of “discipline.”

By discipline I mean the ordered and peaceful piety⁵ of a congregation that arose from faithful adherence to doctrine and the practice of that doctrine in religious ritual and secular life. Historians have narrowed the term to refer to church courts’ employment of coercion as an instrument of secular social control and a reflection of secular class and gender assumptions—as Stephanie McCurry so memorably put it, “Even in evangelical community, justice ran in the grooves cut by social power.”⁶ In other words, society had instrumentalized religion.

Donald Mathews has captured the *social* importance of maintaining discipline, “each person was so important that he or she could not be left alone in sin; both the eternal salvation of the individual and the integrity of the community were at stake.”⁷ For the faithful, and even the recalcitrant, the practice of discipline

lead to the assurance of salvation—the *joyous* assurance if Methodist. I want to reemphasize our understanding of discipline as more than a means of social control. Essential here is that discipline embraced, first and foremost, theological and doctrinal beliefs, and that deviations from congregational belief posed a threat. For example, a congregant who abhorred infant baptism, or the tenets of Calvinism had threatened the social community as much as the drunk or the malcontent. Decades of practice, however, had provided the religious methods of peaceful resolution to sins social *and theological* [which I believe is on the same plane], thus creating a region-wide mood that defined acceptable social behavior.⁸ The aims of religious community effectively established secular, social boundaries. In short, religion had instrumentalized secular society.

So lets look at how the faithful in Piedmont North Carolina understood discipline within and beyond congregational boundaries.

Individuals, congregations, and denominational bodies spent a great deal of time and attention maintaining harmonious communities. Methodists, in class meetings of six to ten members, monthly meetings of whole congregations, and circuit meetings of church elders typically began sessions with the question “Are there any complaints?” meant to elicit any matter of concern regarding the behavior of members to operation of church committees. The question’s position on the agenda indicates the primacy of identifying and resolving sources of conflict. The Baptists had similar procedures as they began meetings with a query about the status of the “fellowship of the church.” No matter the denomination, congregations

placed a great deal of importance on peaceful resolutions to any problem that might arise. Disciplinary cases are notable for the sheer amount of time invested in the work of committees in negotiating with the recalcitrant, and the language of forgiveness and grace surrounding the proceedings.⁹

Apart from avoiding acts of sin with obvious social consequences like vending liquor or quarrelling with a neighbor, church discipline meant the ability to worship among people holding the same doctrinal beliefs as their congregations. In fact, an individual who did not believe a point of doctrine disrupted the peace of the congregation, enough so that expulsion or self-removal was often required. Happily, with the proliferation of Protestant sects, removal from one to another more agreeable congregation of believers was often easily and peaceably accomplished. For instance, Peter and Martha May, Baptists in the Lawyer Spring congregation found a new home at Brown Creek Church in Stanley County in April 1842 after “the Wife...joined a Temperance Society at B.C. [Brown’s Creek] and on that account had been excluded from Lawyer Spring Church, and the Husband thinking her ill treated withdrew.” The Mays found fellowship with Brown Creek, but not before they had an opportunity to assess the congregational discipline at a full meeting of members.¹⁰ Historians might interpret this a social issue dominated by the concern for the honor of the man, but for Baptists, the existence of benevolent societies was *primarily* a theological issue—a matter of scriptural interpretation and individual conscience subject to the discipline of the church.

Religious people also worked to ensure harmonious discipline *between* and *within* denominations. Regional level administration—Circuits for Methodists, Associations for Baptists, and Presbyteries for Presbyterians—closely monitored the “peace” not only in congregations, but also between congregations. The Pee Dee Association reported on the state of Forks Baptist Church in 1841: “alive with benevolence” (meaning temperance and tract enthusiasm.) In 1844 the benevolent impulse had slowed, but at least Forks was “at peace with sister churches.”¹¹ Circuits, Associations, and Presbyteries might dispatch elders to various congregations to help settle internal disputes, as when the Charlotte Circuit resolved a heated disagreement between the Big Spring Church and the carpenter building an arbor for the campground.¹²

The highest priority for denominations—aside from converting people—was to maintain peace through good discipline. Yet denominations themselves frequently collided in heated and public disputes.¹³ Conflict was not the norm—Methodists frequently cooperated with Baptist and Presbyterians—but interdenominational strife did arise from both (1) doctrinal differences and (2) competition for converts and members. These two points of strife represented threats to peace that could not be easily ameliorated through congregational action. Primitive Baptist preacher and editor Burwell Temple described those with theological differences as a “neighbor” who is “proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth.”¹⁴ Perhaps the harshest words existed between Missionary and Antimissionary

Baptists, who sniped regularly at the heresy of each. Antimissionary Baptists charged their brethren in the Baptist State Convention with becoming obsessed with “Institutions of the day” (benevolent societies) for which no precedent could be found in scripture. Missionary Baptists considered their schismatic cousins to be willfully ignorant (of everything). The turbulence surfaced frequently as evidenced by the number of Associations that switched back and forth between the two sects in the 1830s and 1840s.¹⁵ In Cabarrus County, in 1834, a combination of doctrinal difference and competition caused an eruption between the Methodists and Presbyterians in the Presbyterian stronghold. Presbyterians had welcomed some Methodists into their worship and local leaders had a view of benevolent activity that included ecclesiastical cooperation.¹⁶ Yet when the Methodists poached nearly one hundred Presbyterians for their own, the Presbytery of Concord reacted swiftly. A circular letter to all congregations firmly reiterated Presbyterian doctrine: “There is a real & wide difference between the Calvinistick & the Arminian systems.”¹⁷

So, liveliness marked the religious experience in Piedmont North Carolina as congregations battled the sins of doctrinal heresy, ecclesiastical strife, and “doting about questions and strifes of words” to secure peace (peace being the pathway to salvation). The practice of discipline facilitated a useful equilibrium to accommodate the needs of individuals, church doctrine, and social constituencies. Religious people did not shy from strife, but they defined it as a sin to be avoided. The Wesleyan episode of 1847-1851 evolved and escalated. And it did, in its later years, become a reflection of political sectionalism. Yet it began early, stoked by the introduction of doctrinal innovation into a local denominational expansion. The

resulting conflagration revealed the limits of the region's religious-based opposition to slavery.

The most telling doctrinal difference is not that between the Wesleys and their proslavery opponents in North Carolina, but the difference between the Guilford Wesleys in North Carolina and the Allegheny Wesleys from Ohio. The core group of Guilford Wesleys formed in 1846. Daniel Wilson had been unhappy about the schism between the northern and southern branches of the church over slavery. The Guilford Circuit of the MEC, South expelled Wilson in May 1846 with an unusual distemper.¹⁸ Wilson elaborated on the desires of his co-religionists in a letter to the *True Wesleyan* newspaper, requesting a copy of the Wesleyan discipline. "...there are many Methodists with whom I am personally acquainted, who together with myself, feel so conscientiously scrupulous on the subject of slavery that we cannot hold fellowship with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."¹⁹ For these Guilford residents, the formation of a body to practice "true and vital religion" required them to form a body without slaveholders. To fellowship with those who didn't practice the same discipline would be a sinful action. As some Methodists considered slaveholding—and slavery itself—a sin, those who held slaves could not be countenanced in the same way a drunkard or recalcitrant could not stay in fellowship. Though Wilson expressed sympathy with the general Wesleyan antislavery cause, his focus was not emancipation, abolition, or even ministry to enslaved people. It was to fellowship with other nonslaveholders. Wilson's assertion sounds like abolitionist "comeouter-ism," but in the North Carolina context, is not an articulated political position, but an organic expression of religious experience.²⁰

The Guilford Wesleyans stopped short of abolition. This is important. That a religious constituency aimed to form their own fellowship—even one at odds with the prevailing social norms—is, in itself not odd. Similar divisions over doctrine had a well-established history in the region, as it did at a national level.²¹

Adam Crooks and Jesse McBride, the Allegheny Wesleyans missionaries, sought other goals. The Wesleyan discipline—their methods of everyday practice—included regular and uncompromising hostility to other Methodists. Crooks' (passive-aggressive) sermons emphasized the *wholeness* of Methodist doctrine. By using the word “wholeness,” Crooks intentionally signaled an innovative approach to scriptural interpretation at variance with general practice in North Carolina. Thus, as Burwell Temple had warned, Crooks acted “proud, knowing nothing...doting on questions and strifes of words.” *Wholeness*, of course, meant a doctrine that included an antislavery element.²² McBride landed in North Carolina one year after Crooks, and where Crooks had been circumspect, McBride's sermons were fearless in attacking slaveholding as a heresy.²³ They both delighted in identifying and “calling out” Methodists who owned and abused slaves, especially Methodist ministers. Crooks, for instance, identified James Lumsden, a Methodist Episcopal Church minister on the Guilford Circuit, as having “tied up his slave, whipped him a while, and then prayed for him; then whipped and prayed for him, whipping and praying alternately.” Crooks readily condemned Presbyterian slaveholders, of whom he wrote sarcastically “(See how those Christians (?)—love SLAVERY.)”²⁴ Their practice had a hard edge that belied their pretenses to brotherly love and peaceful fellowship.

The difference here is that for the general population in the Piedmont, simple fellowship among non-slaveholders was socially acceptable and unexceptional. Quakers had done so. So had some Antimission Baptists.²⁵ Antagonizing the large majority of religious people who agreed with the proslavery theology of their churches with impatience and sarcasm as heretics and hypocrites was not ordinary or acceptable.²⁶ One offhanded comment illustrates this. In 1851 when Crooks attempted to expand his ministry into Montgomery County, he found a sympathetic audience in the Forks community. His presence aroused the local squirearchy who turned out to demand his departure. In the confrontation, someone referred to O. Hulin, a friend of Crooks, a Wesleyan, and a native of Montgomery—"Oh—we have nothing against Mr. Hulen."²⁷ Everyone tolerated the desire to fellowship separately; they had no toleration for the introduction of strife.

The Allegheny Wesleyans inadvertently sparked denominational competition as well. Coincidentally, Crooks and McBride's mission took place in the immediate wake of the Methodist Protestant Church's efforts to expand their sect into the exact same region. The Methodist Protestants in the late 1840s looked similar to the Methodist Episcopalians in terms of doctrine and denominational activity, including their strong proslavery stance. The only significant difference was the greater presence of laymen in the church hierarchy. The MPs had been a small sect of 3,452 members located primarily around eastern Halifax County where they originated. In 1845 they founded the Methodist Protestant Missionary Society to expand the denomination and eyed Guilford County, where they had an outpost at Liberty Methodist Church as a promising field of work. Led by Reverend Alson Gray, the

MPs set to the work of building a circuit; congregating people into meetings, establishing meeting grounds, appointing class leaders, exhorters, and licensed local ministers, and establishing the church's discipline—the same work Crooks and McBride did a year later.²⁸ The MP effort met some success. They likely gained from the MECS schism, offering a new home for disaffected members.²⁹ Among those disaffected MECS members the MPs targeted were Daniel Wilson's Methodists. The Methodist Protestants initially cooperated with Crooks' and Wilson's Wesleyans.³⁰ They shared meeting grounds and church space and occasionally worshipped together. I suspect the MPs did so in anticipation of swelling their own ranks.

When the MPs fully realized Crooks and McBride's antislavery doctrine and the apparent success they had with recruiting new converts, the relationship turned sour. A telling episode occurred on an unspecified date when Adam Crooks approached an outdoor meeting being held by MP Alson Gray. "I do not think," Gray added extemporaneously into his sermon when Crooks appeared, "it right for the martins to build the nests and the blue-birds to come and steal them away."³¹ Thereafter, according to both the Wesleyans and the MPs, Gray and his cohort became the implacable foes of the Wesleyan effort. The North Carolina Methodist Protestant Conference issued a condemnation of the Wesleyans in 1849, well before civil courts took notice of the Wesleyans.³² The Wesleyans in turn claimed prizes with the addition of former MP Reverend William Anderson to their ranks³³ and a camp meeting in Alamance County in which half of the attendees came from the MP church.³⁴ Not until the next year, 1850, did the Wesleyan cause in North Carolina become a major source of public political crisis. But by 1850 the MPs perceived a

decline in the Wesleyan movement. MP missionary W.H. Wills reported in late 1849 that he believed the Wesleyan growth had reached its limit, and was satisfied that its appeal and strength faded.³⁵

Wills perceived correctly. Wesleyans claimed 275 members in North Carolina in late 1849.³⁶ Methodist Protestant advance in the upper Piedmont between 1845 and 1850 fueled the statewide denominational increase of 735 members.³⁷ The Wesleyans had grown, but the MPs had grown larger. Neither rate of growth was extraordinary among Protestant denominations. And as a comparison, in a population of approximately 553,028 white people in the Piedmont in 1850, nearly 20,000 were Baptist (Missionary and Antimissionary), about 8,745 Presbyterians, and about 13,000 adhered to the Methodist denominations.³⁸ Against these numbers, the Wesleyan appeal is put in perspective at 275. Their success in converting souls was limited, if their success in alarming North Carolinians was more far reaching.

I am suggesting that the larger mood tolerated certain behaviors and rejected others.³⁹ Piedmonters could tolerate sin if it they could abrogate its ill effects by negotiation, or if it did not threaten their fellowship. Piedmonters could live with proslavery or antislavery sentiment, so long as it did not threaten congregational fellowship. Those tolerances had been worked out with decades of practice in maintaining discipline. Here a brief acknowledgement of Quaker participation in this Wesleyan Episode may be instructive. This whole episode unfolded in the Quaker heartland of North Carolina and many Friends provided logistical support

for Crooks and McBride. As we know, the Society of Friends required its membership to affirm a testimony against slavery and the holding of slaves. The North Carolina Yearly Meeting had even developed a type of corporate ownership of slaves to side step the sanction against slave owning while also not violating state laws about emancipation. Crooks and McBride lived with Quaker Richard Mendenhall, and even shows up in his household in the 1850 census. Yet the Friends Yearly Meeting, performed a risky balancing act: it insisted on the testimony against slavery, but absolutely forbade participation in abolitionist activities. In fact, the Advice issued by the Yearly Meeting in 1851 made specific reference to the recent tumult: “That it is our duty to be law-abiding people and in no wise improperly to interfere in the relation between Master and Slave, or with any of the commotions or excitements of the day arising therefrom, which are so well calculated to divert the mind from the true path of virtue. We fear that the present state of things as above referred to, has had a tendency to unsettle the minds of many of our members, and that it is under feelings of this kind that many Friends have been induced to leave their habitations and remove from among us.”⁴⁰ They rejected slaveholding, but saw that the “commotions or excitements of the day arising therefrom” represented a more dire risk to the religious tranquility—the discipline—that its suppression took priority.

Religious discipline had as much influence on social reality as class and gender power had on religious practice. Religion had defined the limits of social behavior—the antislavery call did not overcome the imperative to love and fellowship, because the Wesleyans disrupted the well-established equilibrium of

disciplinary practice. Religious communities bequeathed that equilibrium to southern society. Guilford Wesleyans operated within those bounds with the desire to practice their discipline alone. Crooks and McBride, in condemning slaveholders amidst congregational expansion, disrupted the mood of harmony and peace, thus limiting in one way the appeal of Wesleyan Methodism—and their abolitionist message among the people of Piedmont North Carolina.

¹ Two modern studies have described the Wesleyan episode, Victoria E. Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social & Sexual Control in the Old South* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1992) and Gail Williams O'Brien, *The Legal Fraternity and the Making of a New South Community, 1848-1882* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986). The fullest original source is E.W. Crooks, ed., *Life of Rev. A. Crooks, A.M.* (Syracuse: D.S. Kinney, Wesleyan Methodist Publishing House, 1875). The *Life of Crooks* is Adam Crooks' letters, diaries, and reports shaped into a rough narrative. Roy S. Nicholson apparently had access to Crooks' papers when he wrote *Wesleyan Methodism in the South* (Syracuse: The Wesleyan Methodist Publishing House, 1933). Stanley Harrold has placed the Wesleyan episode in the larger context of the abolitionist movement and religious missions to the south in *The Abolitionists and the South, 1831-1861* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 84-106.

² See specifically Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), chapter 1, Victoria E. Bynum, *Unruly Women*, and *The Long Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and Its Legacies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), and Bill Cecil-Fronsman, *Common Whites: Class and Culture in Antebellum North Carolina* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 6-8.

³ This paper is derived from a larger work offering an exploration of the culture of non-planters in the south. I am not using socioeconomic parameters aside from the standard planter definition of twenty or more slaves to exclude any subject. For the purposes of this paper, it will be assumed (or suggested) that the vast majority of

church members and participants in the Wesleyan episode viewed themselves as rough equals in social standing within congregations.

⁴ Of course, Methodists in the early Nineteenth Century had a reputation for anti-slavery zeal. Contemporaneously, the Society of Friends was understood to be against slavery. In 1835 the Antimissionary Gilliams Church in Alamance County warned a member for slave trading and the following year decided that “we Don’t hold no member in Fellowship of that Negro trading and spe[Speculate?] on Negroes Directly or Indirectly.” See John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 292-293, 333-334, and 384-385, Stephen B. Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery: A Study in Institutional History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1896), and Minutes of Gilliams Church, Wake Forest University Baptist Collection, Z. Smith Reynolds Library.

⁵ Thanks to Robert M. Calhoun for the phrase “ordered piety.”

⁶ Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 136, Robert C. Kenzer, *Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community: Orange County, North Carolina, 1849-1881* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 11-12, and Jean E. Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 12-18.

⁷ Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 42-46, quote on page 46.

⁸ The term *mood* is borrowed from Donald Mathews. He defines it as “that invisible nexus where the individual, family, class, and society are defined and expressed.” Expressed, that is, among a “social constituency that was not quite a class—although it was first expressed as a class movement—nor quite strictly a religious mood apart from social conflict, institution-building, and class consciousness.” Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, xiv.

⁹ The case of William Usery is entirely typical. Usery, an apparent alcoholic, spent a year being tended to by a committee of his church. He was accepted back in, backslid, and was accepted back in again. His congregation expressed great forbearance for his sin before they finally parted ways. William Usery’s cases are in the meeting notes of the Blackwood Chapel Baptist Church, Wake Forest University Baptist Collection, Z. Smith Reynolds Library. See December 1852, March, April, July 1853, and May, June, August, and October 1853.

¹⁰ Brown Creek Baptist Church, April 1842, Wake Forest University Baptist Collection, Z. Smith Reynolds Library.

¹¹ Minutes of the Pee Dee Association, 1841, 1843, and 1844, Wake Forest University Baptist Collection, Z. Smith Reynolds Library.

¹² Resolution on May 19, 1838, Sugar Creek/Charlotte Quarterly Conference Minutes, Western North Carolina Conference Library, Charlotte, N.C.

¹³ See Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), and Richard Cawardine, "Methodists, Politics, and the Coming of the American Civil War," in Nathan O. Hatch and John H. Wigger, eds., *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001). Both authors identify a gradual shift from ecumenical partnership in the first decades of the nineteenth century to increasing hostility, or at least isolationism, by the 1850s.

¹⁴ Burwell quoted 1 Timothy Chapter 6, verse 4-5. In the editorial this is from, he repeated the condemnation about "doting questions and strifes of words" numerous times. *The Primitive Baptist* (Raleigh), vol. 13, no. 14, July 28, 1849. Original in possession of Dirk Allman, Charlotte, North Carolina.

¹⁵ On Baptists, see Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, *Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina...1842* (Newbern: Printed at the Office of the Spectator, 1843), and Thomas S. Malcolm, ed., *The Baptist Almanac and Annual Register For the Year of Our Lord, 1850* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publican Society, 1850). Also see M.A. Huggins, *A History of North Carolina Baptists, 1727-1932* (Raleigh: The General Board Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 1967), G.W. Paschall, *History of North Carolina Baptists* (vol. 1, 1930; vol. 2, 1955), Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1880s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), especially Chapter 5, and James R. Mathis, *The Making of Primitive Baptists: A Cultural and Intellectual History of the Antimission Movement, 1800-1840* (New York: Routledge, 2004). When the Yadkin Association, the chief organization of Baptists in northwestern North Carolina drifted toward Antimissionary sentiment, opponents within the church broke off and formed the Lewis Fork Association, allied with the missionary State Baptist Convention. By 1850, membership in the Lewis Fork Association outnumbered the Yadkin Association. The most consequential Baptist schism in the Piedmont was the breakup of the Abbott's Creek Association in Davidson County in the early 1840s between Antimissionary and Missionaries, known as the Liberty Baptist Association.

¹⁶ A young schoolteacher and Methodist in Concord, Caroline Brooks, occasionally attended Presbyterian services and communions in the company of Reverend Robert Morrison. At the April 9 sermon Morrison shared the platform with Methodist ministers. Caroline Brooks Lilly Diary and Account Book, 1835-1849,

Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, January 22, 1837, April 9, 1837, June 1, 1837. Morrison was active in temperance and educational work in the Concord Presbytery in the 1830s. See Thomas Hugh Spence, Jr., *The Presbyterian Congregation on Rocky River* (Concord, N.C.: Rocky River Presbyterian Church, 1954), 67.

¹⁷ Thomas Hugh Spence, Jr., *The Presbyterian Congregation on Rocky River* (Concord, N.C.: Rocky River Presbyterian Church, 1954), 65.

¹⁸ Guilford Circuit Quarterly Conference Minutes, May 2, 1846, United Methodist Church Papers, Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University. The citation reads “Resolved that it is the opinion of this Conference that Daniel Wilson, in withdrawing from the M.E. Church South, has thereby placed himself out of the pale of the Church & consequently has no right legally to preach or act as an ordained minister and be it further resolved that the preacher in charge, make known his withdrawal at every appointment on Guilford Ct.” A Daniel Wilson appears as a regular attendee at the Quarterly Conference meetings from 1835. He would have been thirty years old at the time he split from the MEC,S.

¹⁹ **FIND THIS**. The *True Wesleyan* published the letter anonymously, but Crooks later identified Wilson as the author.

²⁰ When Daniel Wilson again became the chief spokesman for the North Carolina Wesleyans after Crooks and McBride departed in 1851, he began to adopt the language of the American Missionary Association and the “comeouters,” expressed moments of sympathy for some slaves, and even advocated integrated Sunday Schools. In my dissertation, I am attempting to describe discipline (as I believe Daniel Wilson understood it in 1847) as an organic—and domestic—part of religious life that applied to all areas of social behavior, and not a political or doctrinal plank in an organizational platform. See Harrold, *The Abolitionists and the South*, 94.

²¹ In addition to the schisms in the Baptist church and the Methodist/Presbyterian episode in Concord already mentioned, the Lutherans split in the 1820 “Henkel Schism”, and the Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, and German Reformed congregations in North Carolina took both active and passive stands in the schisms that shook their respective denominations.

²² Crooks’ emphasis on *whole* doctrine is most clear in a sermon he delivered in March 1848 and is discussed in *Life of Crooks*, page 28. When Crooks said *whole* doctrine, he specifically invoked the anti-slavery elements of the Discipline created by Francis Asbury for American Methodists early in his career. Crooks cited Robert Emory, *History of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1843).

²³ Crooks regarded McBride as saintly and pure, but Crooks could not hide the ferocity of McBride's sermons. The difference between the two may be seen in two reports submitted to the *True Wesleyan*, Adam Crooks, "From the South," March 8, 1851, and Jesse McBride, "From North Carolina," April 12, 1851. Denominational historian Roy Nicholson characterized McBride as "a bit more daring in his preaching." Nicholson, *Wesleyan Methodism in the South*, 45.

²⁴ Both quotes in Crooks, *Life of Crooks*, 32. The last sentence of this quotation is a sarcastic rendering of Tertullian's quote, "See how they [Christians] love one another."

²⁵ See footnote 4.

²⁶ By this I do not mean the invocation of shame as described by Bertram Wyatt-Brown (though that is certainly an element.) I mean the declaration that denominational leaders were heretics.

²⁷ Crooks, *Life of Crooks*, 82-83. The haphazard editing of Crook's account makes the identity of this person unclear, but it may have been Samuel Christian. For more on the Hulin family, see Bynum, *The Long Shadow of the Civil War*.

²⁸ The Methodist Protestants in the late 1840s looked similar to the Methodist Episcopalians in terms of doctrine and denominational activity, including their strong proslavery stance. The only significant difference was the greater presence of laymen in the church hierarchy. See J. Elwood Carroll, *History of the N.C. Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church* (Greensboro, N.C.: McCulloch & Swain, 1939), particularly 26-62.

²⁹ Note that schisms always and everywhere produced disaffected members. Disaffection from the MECS upon its formation was hardly unique.

³⁰ Crooks, *Life of Crooks*, 25.

³¹ Nicholson, *Wesleyan Methodism in the South*, 40-41.

³² It read "That in view of some efforts that are being made under the spurious name of Wesleyan Methodism to introduce and enforce the doctrine of Abolition of Slavery in this State by the agency of certain men who have dared to assume the name of Christian ministers that it is the duty of all the ministers and preachers of this Conference to show their unqualified disapprobation of all such associations and not to assist or participate in any of their mischievous and wicked and lawless efforts to subvert order, peace, and prosperity of the citizens of our State. Resolved, furthermore, that those evil and arch agents in this mischief, McBride, Crooks, and

Bacon, should not be permitted to assume any part of any religious service performed in any of our charges or preaching places." Carroll, *History of the N.C. Annual Conference*, 34. The members of the mob in Montgomery County had been aware of this condemnation. Crooks, *Life of Crooks*, 82.

³³ Nicholson, *Wesleyan Methodism in the South*, 36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁵ Carroll, *History of the N.C. Annual Conference*, 34.

³⁶ Nicholson, *Wesleyan Methodism in the South*, 40. A census of Wesleyan members is difficult to compile, this mention in Nicholson being the only assessment I have seen that includes a hard number. He also counted 111 members in Grayson County, Virginia. Crooks himself later estimated a membership of nearly 600, but the number seems optimistic. Daniel Wilson, in 1856, reported 213 members. Harrold, *The Abolitionists and the South*, 197 fn28.

³⁷ Carroll, *History of the N.C. Annual Conference*, 62. A sign of MPs rapid growth in Guilford County can be found in Nicholson, who noted that the MP congregation at Sandy Ridge had risen from four to 174 members since the arrival of Alson Gray in 1844.

³⁸ This estimation of population and census of religious people is taken from my larger work and is a consolidation of a variety of sources including conference minutes, national yearbooks, and church histories.

³⁹ The understanding of tolerance and toleration here is derived from Martha Hodes, who writes "*tolerance* implies a liberal spirit toward those of a different mind; *toleration* by contrast suggest a measure of forbearance for that which is not approved." In *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the 19th-Century South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 3.

⁴⁰ On Quaker assistance, see Nicholson, *Wesleyan Methodists in the South*, and Nereus Mendenhall Diary in Hobbs and Mendenhall Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, June 19, June 20, and June 22, 1851.