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HITES, MARGARET ANN. Peter Doub 1796 - 1869,
His Contribution to the Religious and Educational
Development of North Carolina. (1969) Directed by:
Dr. Richard Bardolph pp.69.

For more than half a century, Peter Doub was identified with North Carolina Methodism, serving for many years as a circuit rider, a district superintendent, a Temperance lecturer, and ending his career as a Professor of Biblical Literature at Trinity College.

The purpose of this study is to re-examine the life of Peter Doub with a view to determining his role in the history of North Carolina and, in a broader sense, to use his work as an example of the contributions which the early circuit riders made to the social, educational and religious development of the state.

The information concerning his life and work was obtained largely from the Doub Papers which have been placed in the Perkins Library at Duke University. These papers contain Doub's handwritten Journal and autobiography, together with his personal correspondence. Certain Methodist newspapers contain articles which he wrote and also information about him written by his contemporaries. These were carefully examined. All available secondary works concerning Doub were reviewed as well as selected

background material about the state and Methodism in the early nineteenth century.

The study revealed that Peter Doub rode the circuits and the districts for forty-two years, serving the people in many ways. He organized churches (including West Market Methodist Church in Greensboro) and was a pioneer in education in the state. Greensboro College stands as a tribute to his early efforts in obtaining higher education for women. Such contributions as these can be recorded in formal data, but much of his work cannot be measured. This study endeavors to reveal something of the hope, courage, endurance and rigorous moral standards which he carried to his widely scattered flock and by such efforts helped to lift the quality of life of North Carolina in the early nineteenth century.

This study re-enforces the statement of William W. Sweet in his Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840, The Methodists, that "no single force had more to do with bringing order out of frontier chaos than the Methodist circuit rider, and among no other class of men was the heroic element more finely displayed."

PETER DOUB 1796 - 1869
HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE RELIGIOUS
AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF NORTH CAROLINA

by

Margaret Ann Hites

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Greensboro
April, 1969

Approved by

Richard Barstow
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A sincere word of appreciation must go to several persons whose kind assistance was so important to this study.

My thanks go to Mrs. Ethel S. Arnett who first called my attention to Peter Doub and the importance of his work in the Greensboro area.

I am also greatly indebted to the librarians of Greensboro College and those of the Manuscript Department of the Perkins Library at Duke University who always cheerfully helped me find materials I needed, and to Mrs. Robert Laughlin, Editorial Assistant, North Carolina Christian Advocate, who permitted me to return again and again to examine the old and fragile Methodist newspapers on file in her office.

My sincere gratitude goes to my adviser, Dr. Richard Bardolph, who guided this study not only with advice but also with encouragement.

And to my husband and two sons I owe a personal appreciation for the interest they always showed in my work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. BACKGROUND AND EARLY CHILDHOOD	7
III. EDUCATION AND CALL TO MINISTRY	13
IV. LIFE'S WORK	24
V. MIND AND PERSONALITY	51
VI. SUMMARY	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	66

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For more than half a century, Peter Doub was identified with North Carolina Methodism. As one account of that church's early years in the state puts it, "His history is no small portion of its history."¹ The life Doub lived, and the contributions he made to the religious and cultural development of North Carolina were significant, and the purpose of this study is to re-examine his life with a view to determining his role in the history of North Carolina Methodism and, in a broader sense, to use his work as an example of the contributions which the early circuit riders made to the social, educational and religious development of the state.

Although settlers began entering the North Carolina region from the colony of Virginia as early as 1653, it was still a very sparsely settled area when Peter Doub was born in 1796, a scant two decades after the transition of North Carolina from colony to commonwealth. Immigrants, primarily the English, Scots, Swiss and Germans, had already entered North Carolina to claim available land.

¹Marquis L. Wood, "Eulogy on the Life and Labors of Rev. Peter Doub, D.D.," in Centennial of Methodism in North Carolina, ed. by L. S. Burkhead (Raleigh, N.C.: John Nichols, Book and Job Printer, 1876), p. 245.

Between 1745 and 1775 several thousand Germans had left the Palatinate, fleeing religious persecution, and had arrived in Pennsylvania where they lingered a while before taking the Piedmont road to the Yadkin River. Peter Doub's father was among these Germans, a thrifty people, fervently religious. These sturdy folk began immediately their task of building a new society, but the state in the closing decades of the eighteenth century was still sparsely populated. In 1800 there were many unclaimed acres, and only a fraction of North Carolina's land was under cultivation.

The state entered the nineteenth century with a small population unmistakably stamped by frontier conditions. The Revolution had been a time of social disruption, disorder, and readjustment; many of the social advancements which had been begun had to be postponed. By 1800 accommodations to changing circumstances were being attempted, but these were difficult. Communities and farms were widely separated; roads were poor, when they existed at all. The only outlet from the state was by wagon to towns along the coast. The state remained provincial, for there was no large commercial town to give leadership and develop common interests among the people. This also fostered a sectionalism that was to have a pronounced effect upon the state.

The railroad, cotton factory, machine shop or flour mill had not appeared. Instead there was the blacksmith shop, the grist mill on the creek, and the wheel and loom at home. Communication was inadequate. Edenton, New Bern, Washington and Wilmington were the only post offices in the state. Postage was twenty-five cents per letter, and it hardly seemed worth this precious amount when it was uncertain when the letter would arrive. Mail was still largely carried by travellers; however, the majority of the people were illiterate, so this inadequacy in the postal system was perhaps not as great a disadvantage as may be supposed.

Even though the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had an early beginning in 1795, education had a difficult time in ante-bellum North Carolina. In 1800 a correspondent for the Raleigh Register deplored the fact that nine-tenths of the people in North Carolina lived in "brutish ignorance."²

Although every village and rural community had a subscription or old field school³ at some time, they often did not have a teacher for more than one of every two or

²Guion Griffis Johnson, Ante-bellum North Carolina, A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), p. 259.

³Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines old field school as "a rural elementary school often built in an exhausted corn or tobacco field and common in the South before the Civil War."

three years since the distances between farms made it difficult and unprofitable to secure permanent instructors. The uneducated, moreover, not understanding their own needs, were often indifferent or opposed to education. The leading authority on ante-bellum North Carolina has concluded that the first six decades of the nineteenth century opened and closed with a shocking indifference to education on the part of the majority of North Carolinians. People of every rank were, in fact, opposed to the very principle of public education.⁴ A public school system was not established until 1839.

Like industry, trade and education, religion suffered grave disruption in the Revolutionary period. Immorality and unbelief had advanced; Deism and skepticism had reached even the masses and had had its deleterious effect upon the organized church. In 1790 the population of the state was 393,751. Of this number, some 50,000 were heads of families. A liberal estimate gives 30,000 as church members, leaving 363,751 for the church to cultivate.⁵

⁴Johnson, Ante-bellum North Carolina, p. 281.

⁵William K. Boyd, "Methodist Expansion in North Carolina After the Revolution," Historical Papers, Series XII (Durham, N.C.: Trinity College Historical Society, 1916), pp. 37-38.

Although the Methodist denomination was to have a vigorous role in establishing a rapport between religion and the conditions of life in ante-bellum North Carolina, the beginnings were modest enough. In 1776 there were less than seven hundred persons in North Carolina who were even inclined toward Methodism. It was at this time only a small sect within the Church of England. After the Revolution, it, too, secured its independence in 1784, becoming a separate Protestant denomination, the Methodist Episcopal Church, completely severed from the old Anglican connection. The Revolution, itself, had had a destructive effect upon the fledgling denomination. The English John Wesley, who had led it until its independence, had advised the Methodists to say nothing on either side, to be peacemakers. This led to misunderstanding which exposed many Methodist preachers to the suspicion of busy Tories, and persecution of the new sect developed, rendering it dangerous for the preachers to travel. The war had other effects, aside from the political, which had their bearing upon the progress of Methodism. According to one historian, "Many fell in battle and never returned to take their places in the church; while many others were corrupted by camp life and made shipwreck of

the faith, and returned home strangers to grace. Its evil effects were felt upon Methodism in many ways; and no section suffered more than North Carolina."⁶

Of the religious bodies in America at the close of the Revolution, the Methodists were among the most insignificant, both in numbers and in influence.⁷ But growth was steady and by 1860 there were more than 57,000 Methodists in North Carolina alone.

The work of Peter Doub appears in this eighty-fold increase from 1776 to 1860, but increase in the numbers of adherents was only a small part of his total contribution. Another fruit of his labors was the geographic spread of the cult. Although he lived out his life in North Carolina, many of his converts moved west, carrying his influence across the mountains. Because this part of his work can never be assessed, this study must be confined to North Carolina and to those efforts which are recorded in documents, which were, at most, only a small portion of the whole.

⁶W. L. Grissom, History of Methodism in North Carolina from 1772 to the Present Time, I (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1905), 82.

⁷William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier 1783-1840, Vol. IV: The Methodists (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p.3.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

The father of Peter Doub, John Doub, was among those German immigrants who arrived in Pennsylvania just prior to the Revolution. For several years he lived with a step-brother in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, before moving to Stokes County, North Carolina, where he engaged in the business of tanning.

In his autobiography, Peter Doub wrote of his father with candor, affection and, above all, with deep respect.¹ The elder Doub seems to have had all the distinctive characteristics of the German immigrant; he was patient, persevering, dependable, unbending and authoritarian. He had received the education common to the better class of mechanics in Germany, and he also had a good practical, if somewhat elementary, knowledge of chemistry. He understood metallic substances and knew well how to obtain precious metals in their pure state. He was also well trained in tanning and all the skills of skin dressing. All of these

¹Peter Doub, Autobiography MSS, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, William C. Doub Papers, 1778-1917.

practical arts were useful and needed in his new, rural environment, and he must have had very little difficulty finding a place for them. Even though most of the inhabitants of the rural communities were compelled by the primitive conditions of the frontier to spend the bulk of their time on activities of subsistence, John Doub somehow found time to devote to study. After he was fifty years old, he acquired a good knowledge of the English language and even mastered the theological polemics of the Reverend John Fletcher's book, Checks to Antinomianism. His course in self-instruction was not a simple one - a new language, a treatise on theology. This devotion to systematic learning was early instilled in his son.

Peter Doub's mother was Mary Eve Spainhauer, born in York County, Pennsylvania, in 1755, of Swiss parentage. When she was eight years old, her father moved to Stokes County, North Carolina, where at the age of fifteen, she joined the Dutch Reformed Church. Somewhere in this rural county, she met John Doub and they were married in 1780.

The personal qualities which Mary Eve possessed provided the counterpart to her husband, to provide a household of order, security and affection. She had the gift of happiness, rarely permitting her natural cheerfulness to give place to melancholy. She had, the record

suggests, the ability to make all around her feel happy. She also was able to maintain a systematic, orderly household, which must have been appreciated, if not required, by her authoritarian husband. She bore nine children, of whom Peter was the youngest. He was later to say of his mother that "As a wife, she was always affectionate and obliging. As a mother, she was particularly fond of her children; but yet very strict in the exercise of parental discipline; and yet mild in the administration of correctives in case of delinquency."²

The Doub household was ruled by a strict father who seemed to have been able to exercise discipline and instil respect and affection with it. Family devotions were held morning and night so that the family table appeared to be more of a place for worship than a place for eating.

John and Mary Eve Doub became adherents of the new sect of Methodism which had been introduced in 1780 into western North Carolina. Soon after coming to America, John had met and fallen under the influence of the Reverend Mr. Otterbein, presumed to be William Otterbein, founder of the United Brethren. He had visited the Doub home as a circuit

²Letter, Peter Doub to N. Bangs and T. Merritt, Sept. 2, 1835, Duke University, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, William C. Doub Papers, 1778-1917.

rider. In 1780 the Yadkin Circuit was formed and was served by the Reverend Andrew Yeargan. The Doubs went to hear him preach and invited him to their home. In 1792, John and Mary Eve joined the Methodist Episcopal Church and gave themselves wholeheartedly to its support. A church was organized in their home with six or eight members and John Doub became a local preacher, ordained as deacon by Bishop Whatcoat in December 1802. Choosing to identify himself with the English-speaking Germans, he diligently applied himself to study, mastering the language and becoming an effective preacher. His home became one of the regular meeting places of the Circuit and was the beginning of Doub's Chapel in Forsythe County.

This pious German father and his cheerful, happy wife established a home of hospitality to visitors and one of strict regimen for their nine children. Peter Doub reported in his autobiography that he was required to conform his life strictly to the established order of the family. He was taught early to revere and respect his parents above all others, their will being supreme law of the household. Each member of the family knew his established place and no one could interfere with the rights and privileges

of another. Each was responsible for himself; and although the discipline was not cruel or oppressive, no delinquency was ever permitted.³

Peter Doub expressed his appreciation and admiration for his family, and particularly his father, when he wrote:

Unanimity, harmony and peace were the constant daily accompaniments of this family; and hence it was moral, happy and respected. This seemed to be the great object with him and in its constant and abiding influence he took great delight. The result of this regimen was that all the family with one exception have been members of the church and have maintained an integrity for religious character rarely to be met with in any family or community.⁴

The Doub household was always open to visitors without regard to rank or social condition, if they were upright and respectable. The criterion which determined whether or not they were welcome was purity of character. The children were not permitted to associate with the wicked, and profane language was not allowed by anyone. Traveling ministers were favored guests and they had a profound influence upon young Peter. Although Peter confessed that in his heart he was tempted to indulge in the "vain and wicked amusements of the times," he was kept from any overt wicked behavior by the early influences of his training.⁵

³Peter Doub, Autobiography, p. 28.

⁴Ibid., pp. 25-26. ⁵Ibid., p. 33.

These early influences of his parents remained vivid and strong, easy to see and trace into maturity. John and Mary Eve Doub reared their nine children and lived out their pious, useful and simple lives amid the yeoman people of rural, rustic Stokes County, North Carolina.

The Doub family belongs to the yeomanry of the South. They were not millionaires. Unlike the Duke of Wellington, they were not lords. They were not even lords of the manor. They were yeomen. They were simple, useful, and pious. They were the backbone of the South. They were the people who built the South. They were the people who made the South what it is today.

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CHAPTER III

EDUCATION AND CALL TO MINISTRY

Education in North Carolina in the early nineteenth century was not a privilege available to everyone. The University was in its infancy, and popular schooling was non-existent except in a few private schools. Seventy-two percent of the population belonged to the yeomanry, a class which maintained itself on its farms with only the help of family members, and there was little time for education. A large percentage of this group was illiterate.

The Doub family belonged to the yeomanry, but they were not illiterate. Unlike the bulk of their neighbors, they made weekly study a part of their regulated activities. Each child had an assignment for the week, and not only studied individually, but discussed with his fellows the implications of what he learned.

The only schooling Peter Doub ever received outside the home was in the old field schools, obtained at irregular intervals over a period of seven or eight years. These intervals of formal education lasted from six weeks to three months and amounted to perhaps a year and a half in the aggregate. His first school experience lasted six

weeks, and it was then that he learned the alphabet and how to read a little in the New Testament. Eight or ten months elapsed before he again attended school when he had to relearn how to read, but he never again forgot. The only books available were Dillworth's Spelling Book, an arithmetic, and the Testament. While a student, he never saw a dictionary and he was grown and a member of the itineracy before he saw a manual of grammar. The educational opportunities were as inferior as they were limited. Schools were conducted, at best, only in the winter, for three or four months, and then frequently by unskilled persons. Arithmetic seems to have been somewhat better taught than were the other essentials, but progressed only to what was called the Double Rule of three. To this was added reading and writing. Geography, grammar, history and philosophy were completely unknown. His education in good English had to wait until after he became a Methodist minister.

But the process of learning and mental discipline was not that long deferred. His father, as soon as he was able to read, placed in his hands a pamphlet called "A Scripture Catechism." Catechisms had to be learned perfectly for examination by the itinerant preacher when he appeared on his next round. Doub also required all the children

to read the New Testament through. Each week a chapter was selected to be studied and committed to memory; and as a Sabbath exercise, each child was expected first to recite from memory his chapter and then to endeavor to give its meanings and his own views concerning it.

Another important educational influence upon the youthful Peter were the visits of the traveling ministers who stopped overnight in his home. It was the custom for these men to converse individually and privately with each member of the family before leaving, an experience in which Peter frequently shared, according to his later testimony. Writing as an adult, he expressed both his gratitude for the impressions learned from these men and his regret that the custom had passed.¹ Here again is an individual example of the great influence, both culturally and educationally, which the circuit riders had upon rural America.

Another form of education used by the Doub family was that of conversation in the family circle, carried on mainly by the father and the older brothers. The subjects were of general interests and were handled in a manner similar to debating societies. The oldest brother, John, somehow secured some books on philosophy and led the family

¹Peter Doub, Autobiography, pp. 39-42.

in philosophical discussions.

Since there were few meeting houses in which the circuit riders could hold services, private homes were used for the purpose. For several years the Doub home had been used for such services, and Peter heard many sermons preached. To these lengthy, exhortatory, expository orations, he listened intently, and from these preachers learned important impressions which he later looked back upon as an important part of his early education.

These were all the educational benefits which Peter Doub received before entering the work of the church; but if the educational content was limited or lacking, what he learned of the value of education was vast and it continued to grow. Years later he was to say of himself:

Often has he looked back to those scenes and times of ignorance with the greatest astonishment and had he then have known his ignorance and the vast amount of knowledge necessary to make a minister of Christ worthy of the cause and competent [sic] to discharge the function of the Christian ministry he never would could have embarked in such enterprises.²

It is apparent that Peter's educational training was so bound to religious training that it would be impossible to separate the two. These were days of great religious revivals in North Carolina, and it was inevitable that the

²Ibid., p. 49.

Doub family would be caught up in them.

Peter Doub has recorded in his Journal that his first personal religious "experience" of which he had memory was at the age of six in 1802 on the occasion of a camp meeting held on his father's land.³ This was the year that the Great Revival came to North Carolina.⁴ He and an older brother discussed their impressions and decided to lead better lives, and Peter, at this early age, felt he would become a preacher. These convictions followed him for years but eventually faded and were forgotten. He went to school where secular and profane matters claimed his attentions; and although he was shocked at first at hearing swearing, he soon came to regard it as trivial and even indulged in the vice himself, although not, he later recalled, in anyone's presence.

His religious impressions seemed to have lain dormant until he reached the age of twenty-one in 1817. He had always had a "strong and respectful regard for religion" and had plans for seeking it before he died. He says he was led in a course of "carelessness rather than out-breaking wickedness."⁵

³Peter Doub, Journal MSS, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Willian C. Doub Papers, 1778-1917.

⁴Johnson, Ante-bellum North Carolina, pp.383-384.

⁵Doub, Journal, p. 5.

He had begun farming with one of his brothers and was not particularly concerned about his soul. The reading of scripture and a book of sermons by the Reverend Joseph Brown had prepared his mind for a conversion experience but the immediate cause occurred October 5, 1817, when he attended a camp meeting in Davie County and heard a sermon by the Reverend Edward Cannon, Presiding Elder of the Yadkin District. The minister's text was taken from Revelation 7:9, "After this, I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne. . ." The Elder's portrayal of this "great multitude" so touched the heart of young Doub that tears ran down his face and he was unable to respond to the invitation to the altar. Observing his attempts, his friend, Moses Brock, came forward to assist him. He remained at the altar until night but found no relief for his heavy heart. On Monday morning, the meeting was to close after the eight o'clock sermon. When the invitation came at the close, Peter, with other young men, entered the altar. He wrote that while he thought the ground on which he was kneeling had broken from the surrounding earth and that he was literally sinking alive into hell, the thought arose in his mind, "Well, if I sink to rise no more, I will try

and look up once more as it cannot make my condition worse.⁶ Upon doing so, he felt miraculously eased, and for two hours or more proclaimed his deliverance, shouted, exhorted, and "encouraged" the congregation. Ten days after this experience he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church at his parents' home which had been a regular meeting place on the Yadkin Circuit since 1792.

Doub's conversion experience was not an unusual expression for the times. Compared to some, it was somewhat restrained. The Great Revival movement which had begun in 1802 had reached its peak in 1804 but intermittent revivals continued. Bishop Asbury thought 1808 had exceeded former years. Meetings had declined by 1812 but by 1818 another revival was under way.⁷ It was customary at the camp meetings for the ministers to call mourners⁸ (those interested in seeking salvation) to the altar. When "relief" was obtained by someone, he often arose to proclaim his salvation and to exhort other penitents in their struggles. Doub's conversion remained for him the most vivid and poignant event of his young manhood.

⁶Doub, *Autobiography*, p. 63.

⁷Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 388.

⁸Not infrequently referred to in frontier America as "moaners."

The period between conversion and entering upon the ministry was not an easy time for Doub. He became increasingly aware of the conditions of mankind, and thoughts of preaching entered his mind, but he was overwhelmed by thoughts of his own inadequacies for such an undertaking, his lack of education, his limited knowledge of the Scriptures. He regarded the Bible as a "sealed book" and shrank from the prospect of leading people into error. He was also inhibited by a great timidity and a habit of avoiding public attention. "The idea of preaching was too much for me," he said. "I could not consent in my own mind ever to become a preacher."⁹ He tried for a time to lose himself in his temporal affairs in order to divert his mind. He had begun farming with a brother with the intention of making these arrangements permanent, but the conflict remained so strong, he said, "I had well nigh lost all the comforts of the Holy Ghost."¹⁰ Although he felt unqualified, "he gave his heart's consent because he believed that Christ would never have called him to this work unless he also intended to aid him in it according to the promise."¹¹ This promise he relied upon very heavily all his life.

⁹Doub, Journal, p. 6. ¹⁰Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹¹Doub, Autobiography, p. 76.

Without the knowledge or consent of his family, he decided to offer himself to the church as a candidate for the ministry "in the traveling connection." When his Presiding Elder, Edward Cannon, told his mother of his plans, she was momentarily dismayed at the prospect of giving up her youngest child whom she had hoped to keep with her, but she readily consented. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference of the Yadkin Circuit, held at the Doub home, he was recommended to the Annual Conference to be held in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1818.

After the Quarterly Meeting, he spent a few weeks traveling with Presiding Elder Cannon. His first experience at public speaking was to remain a vivid recollection for the rest of his life. He was asked to give the exhortation at the close of a sermon preached by the Reverend Lewis Kimball, at a Mr. Long's on Deep Creek, Yadkin County. It was an agonizing attempt, and he spent the night in despair with a sure sense of failure, but his Presiding Elder encouraged him to persist and go forward. Doub always felt this experience to have been an important lesson to remind him of his own inadequacies in his work and to depend upon God to give him what was needed. He also learned from this

"the importance of a full and decided purpose to discharge every duty whatever it might cost. It was a heavy cross."¹²

Doub preached his first sermon on the first Sunday of January, 1818. The text was from Mark 12:32. "there is one God," and his topic was "The Unity of the Divine Being," on which he talked for twenty or twenty-five minutes. Naturally, he was later amazed that he had dared attempt such an abstruse and difficult topic, but it was a subject which always engaged his deep interest and study. "In his old age he declared that human language was too feeble to convey to the mind of another the 'astounding views' that he held concerning the Infinite One."¹³ He continued to preach on Sundays until he received his appointment at the Annual Conference in April, 1818, where he was appointed to the Haw River Circuit to work under the direction of the Reverend Christopher L. Mooring.

Doub's experiences as an assistant to Reverend Mooring were crucial and were to influence all his future work, attitudes, and life habits. He had many trials and difficulties arising from his inexperience and timidity.

¹²Ibid., p. 89.

¹³O. P. Fitzgerald, "Peter Doub," in Centenary Cameos (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1886), p. 283.

His Journal relates a most significant experience:¹⁴

Brother Mooring requested me to walk with him, which I did, when he observed, "Brother Doub, the people have some objections to your preaching." I asked, "What," he observed, "that they do not object to your matter, or manner, but that you are too short." I answered that "I preached as long as I could, without repeating what I had said." "Well," said he, "you must read more, think more, and pray more and then you can preach more." This circumstance bore very heavily on my mind for some time; and induced me several times to come almost to the conclusion that I would quit and go home: but after a while I got over this struggle, took the old man's advice, and found to my own satisfaction, that reading, thinking and praying was good employment to the Soul: And to that advice I attribute two things: my long preaching, and that unquenchable thirst for reading.

¹⁴Doub, Journal, p. 8.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE'S WORK

"Into the mountain coves of western North Carolina, the rolling hills of the piedmont," wrote Professor Guion Johnson, "across the swamps and through the forests and sand hills of the East, the Methodist circuit riders began their march, carrying the message of a salvation free to all through the simple act of accepting it."¹ In 1818 Peter Doub joined this company of valiant men and eventually spent twenty-one years as a circuit rider in North Carolina, in addition to twenty-one years traveling the Districts.

His first appointment at the Norfolk Annual Conference in 1818 was to the Haw River Circuit. The circuit was a very large one, with twenty-seven appointments, requiring four weeks to visit them all, and leaving little time for the reading which Doub had determined upon. In 1818 the revival movement had again engulfed North Carolina, and he was an active participant. At the camp meeting held at Prospect Meeting House in Randolph County, the Presiding Elder James

¹Guion Griffis Johnson, "Revival Movements in Antebellum North Carolina," The North Carolina Historical Review, X (Jan. 1933), 24.

Patterson called upon him to preach several times and frequently to exhort the congregation.

One Sunday after the three o'clock sermon, the Presiding Elder called upon him to warn and advise the people. Many came to the altar; and when he left the stand, passing through the congregation, calling the people to repentance, "a great many fell to the earth crying aloud for mercy."² On the whole, the first year on the itineracy was a successful and happy time.

The next year's Conference met at Oxford-Granville County, North Carolina. This was Doub's first attendance at an Annual Conference, and he was filled with awe, thinking it to be a holy and solemn place which ordinary persons should not enter. His fear that the Bishops would overlook him in their appointments proved groundless, for he was appointed to the Culpeper Circuit in Virginia, beyond Richmond City. This assignment was to prove a new experience, with many new adjustments to make. In the first place, it was his first experience at being far from home. His earlier appointment had been within two days' travel from home; now he was three hundred miles away among complete strangers. He was also alone, in complete charge of the churches, but this circuit

²Doub, Autobiography, p.99.

was smaller than his first, having only fourteen appointments to make.

He found his churches in a drooping condition. Religion had become a merely customary and formal thing, and, in his judgment, several members needed to be expelled. This crisis embarrassed him because he knew very little about disciplinary matters, but he studied the Scriptures, explained, advised his parishioners, and invited the official members to assist him. This was an effective method, and the people proposed to carry out the received principles of Methodism. But because Doub still felt that the spirit of their religion lacked vitality, he insisted on "experimental godliness." He preached on this theme and it had the effects he desired. Religion was revived, and before the end of the year a great spiritual resurgence occurred and spread to several neighborhoods.

During this year, Doub had more time for reading and devoted himself to a rigorous program of study which required great self-discipline. Concerning this, he wrote, "During my labours in this year, I became more and more convinced of the importance of Studying and paying close attention to Reading; hence I engaged in a very laborious course of Reading; which at first appeared like sapping my Constitution; . . ." ³

³Doub, Journal, p. 10.

The Methodists did not, at this time, require an educated ministry, although they did encourage study. The greatest emphasis was upon "the call," and Doub, assured of his calling, and realizing the limitations which his lack of education laid upon him, began early to remedy the deficiency as best he could. In this year, he secured and studied Clark's Commentary on the Pentateuch and the Gospels. Thus began an extensive pursuit of Biblical knowledge which he continued all his life.

The 1820 Annual Conference held at Richmond, Virginia, ordained him as Deacon and sent him to Bedford and Lynchburg with the Reverend Thomas Mann in charge. The following year, he was sent back to the Haw River Circuit, this time in charge and alone, to travel the large four weeks' round of appointments. It was an eventful year as meetings turned into revivals and approximately a thousand people professed conversion. The Baptists were also active in this region and the greater number of these converts joined that sect. The year also saw his marriage to Elizabeth Brantly of Chatham County, on August 17; but because of previous arrangements made on the circuit, Doub began a two-day meeting with Presiding Elder William Compton on the day after his marriage and from there went to a camp meeting.

Doub was by now maintaining a strenuous schedule on his circuit. The life of the circuit rider was a difficult one at best and many suffered a decline in health, and some even died under the strain. They traveled by horseback or walked through every sort of weather, fording streams, suffering from wet and cold, stopping in all kinds of homes, taking the risks of whatever accommodations and food were available. Only a few were able to stand the hardships of the itineracy for many years. By 1847, of the Methodist preachers whose deaths had been recorded, almost one half had died before the age of thirty-five, while two-thirds had perished before they had spent more than twelve years in itinerant service.⁴ Although Doub was a large man and was inured to heavy physical labor, having worked for many years on a farm, he, too, became ill and the strain of too much work almost brought on collapse. On October 21, 1821, he wrote a letter to Reverend William Compton, recounting with enthusiasm the success of his work on the circuit, and ending with these poignant lines:

I have labored until I am almost broken down, though my weakness is chiefly occasioned by cold. On Friday

⁴Paul Neff Garber, The Romance of American Methodism (Greensboro, N.C.: Piedmont Press, 1931), p. 77.

afternoon of the camp meeting and the fore part of the night I was almost at the gate of death but the Lord in Mercy raised me again. But since that time my health has been bad, I have not seen a well hour since the 12th of this instant and I am sometime inclined to think unless I could stop and rest a week or two that I shall intirely [sic] break down. I have a very severe cough, and almost a perpetual disentry [sic] or something like the flux which has reduced me very much perhaps 20 weight since I was first taken. But bless the Lord I still feel the traveling spirit and feel determined to go as long as I can get along.⁵

Only his enthusiasm for his work kept him going.

The next year in March, 1822, the Annual Conference was held at Newbern, North Carolina, and here Doub was ordained Elder and appointed to the Raleigh Circuit. By September both he and his wife were attacked by the "bilious fever" and he was unable to give attention to his circuit until late November.

North Carolina was plagued with such fevers, which, though called by various names, were usually some form of malaria or typhoid. These scourges were an annual autumn occurrence, especially in the eastern portion of the state; but as the Piedmont became more thickly settled, the malarial conditions moved inland along the waterways.⁶

⁵Letter, Peter Doub, to Reverend William Compton, Oct. 21, 1821, Duke University, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, William C. Doub Papers, 1778-1917.

⁶Johnson, Ante-bellum North Carolina, pp. 722-730.

The Doubs, along with many other Carolinians, became victims of these debilitating fevers, but before his attack, Doub had already read the entire Old Testament and much of the New while making his way through Clark's Commentary.

The 1823 Annual Conference appointed Doub to the Granville Circuit and returned him there in 1824. The Roanoke Circuit was his appointment in 1825 and in August of that year he again fell victim to the bilious fever, which incapacitated him until November and nearly cost him his life.

Beginning with 1826, his ninth year in the ministry and for four successive years through 1829, Doub was sent to the Yadkin District. This brought a new and larger responsibility, superintending the churches in the counties of Granville, Orange, Person, Chatham, Alamance, Caswell, Rockingham, Guilford, Stokes, Forsythe, Surry, Yadkin, Wilkes, Alexander, Iredell, Rowan, Davie, Davidson, parts of Randolph, Montgomery, and Warren in North Carolina and Halifax, Pittsylvania, Franklin, Henry, and Patrick in Virginia, twenty-six in all. In these four years, he covered this assignment approximately twenty times, preaching an average of fifty sermons on each round, not counting his many exhortations and addresses. He held 144

Quarterly Conferences and fifty camp meetings and attended the General Conference held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1828. One year he held sixteen camp meetings in as many weeks and preached at each from four to seven times.⁷

In 1829 there were 627 converts at his own meetings; and during the four years there were 2,738 converts at meetings which he superintended.⁸

After this quadrennium of arduous activity, it is understandable that Peter Doub, at the Richmond, Virginia, Conference of 1830, requested Bishop Soule to relieve him of the District work and send him back to the circuit.

During the next eight years, he served six circuits in North Carolina and two in Virginia; and all the while, though carrying on the work of the circuits, he somehow found the time to study and refine his conceptions of Christian doctrine, ecclesiastical history and church polity. Much of his preaching in those years was doctrinal. It was also lengthy, for he had come a long way since the days of his probation when his flock complained of the brevity of his sermons.⁹ In 1830, while assigned

⁷Marion T. Plyler and Alva W. Plyler, "Peter Doub," in Men of the Burning Heart (Raleigh, N.C.: Commercial Printing Company, 1918), p. 203.

⁸Doub, Journal, p. 26.

⁹Wood, "Eulogy," p. 251.

to the Guilford Circuit, at a camp meeting at Lowe's Church, Rockingham County, he preached the eleven o'clock sermon which lasted four hours and fifteen minutes. Said one commentator of this extraordinary exertion:

His Presiding Elder, John Early . . . took him in hand: "Doub, you have sense, and you know how to preach," said he; "but your sermons are too long; you wear the people out. You are like a man fishing up a river, who turns a-side to fish in every little creek or branch that runs into the main stream. Keep to the main channel. You need not try to tell all you know in one sermon."¹⁰

Again at a camp meeting at Pleasant Garden, Guilford County, he was allotted two hours in which to preach a sermon on Sanctification. He began at eleven o'clock in the morning and closed shortly before three o'clock in the afternoon. These lengthy sermons doubtless tried the patience, if not the physical endurance of his hearers, but they produced results. The more-than-four-hour sermon, together with the evening effort, brought in sixty converts, and the other at Pleasant Garden brought in eighty at the first call.¹¹ A sensible and sensitive man, Doub apparently took the Presiding Elder's advice, for he is said to

¹⁰Fitzgerald, "Peter Doub," p. 284.

¹¹Wood, "Eulogy," p. 260.

have remarked, "'I had a way,' he says, 'when I came to a place in preaching where there was a temptation to me to turn aside, of mentally whispering to myself, "There are fish up that stream, but I must not go after them."'"¹²

At this period, Doub was also engaged in doctrinal disputes. He always had differed with the Baptists on the subject of infant baptism, and he began in 1830 to study the topic and investigate exhaustively the testimony that Scripture had to offer on the point. He concluded, on the basis of Abraham's covenant with God, that infant baptism and church membership were valid and scriptural.¹³

In 1831, Doub became involved in a controversy with the Presbyterians in Greensboro, and the dispute raged for several months. In August, 1831, the Synod of North Carolina met in Greensboro and Doub, hearing every sermon that was preached, became concerned because "the preachers seemed to wish to instil the doctrines of Calvin into the minds of the hearers, through the medium of Arminianism."¹⁴ He felt that the doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been assailed, and wrote an article to defend the tenets of Methodism. His reason

¹²Fitzgerald, "Peter Doub," p. 284. ¹³Genesis 17.

¹⁴Doub, Journal, p. 82.

for writing, he said, was "for the special purpose of counteracting the deleterious effects of the Calvinism advanced by almost every minister that preached during the session of their Synod."¹⁵

Doub was accused of exhibiting an un-Christian spirit, but he maintained what he did was through love and friendship and not through any desire to cause a breach between the Methodists and Presbyterians. His motive was "to bring before the publich[sic] the true doctrines of the Gospel of the Grace of God; not to lead into, but to deliver the people from, pernicious errors."¹⁶

Twenty-eight years later, in 1859, he was still defending Arminianism against Calvinism. In reply to the assertions that the Arminians had unduly attacked Calvinism, he wrote:

Sometimes, it may be true, that writers of the Arminian faith, may have even attacked Calvinism, when there was no particular occasion offered by Presbyterians: but then, it should be remembered that others, who are not Presbyterian, are nevertheless Calvinistic; and to meet their assaults, Arminians have been compelled to attack Calvinism, entirely irrespective of Presbyterianism.¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid., p. 84. ¹⁶Ibid., 85.

¹⁷Peter Doub, "Calvinism vs. Arminianism, Revised - No. II," North Carolina Christian Advocate, IV (May 12, 1859), 1.

After Doub's death in 1869, there appeared in a published eulogy a note of enlightenment as to when and how he had become involved in this kind of doctrinal disputation:

The early history of Dr. Doub, we have thought was not as favorable as it might have been, for the full development of the more practical and useful powers of his great mind and heart. At the period he entered the ministry, the section in which he travelled, was preoccupied with ministers and people, who held to the Calvinistic faith, and whose proclivity to controversial sermons and discussions predominated, and the Arminian or Wesleyan theology was a chief topic of attack and animadversion.¹⁸

His differences with the Calvinists were not the only occasions for the debates into which he was drawn. He was always willing to engage in verbal combat with anyone who assailed what he considered to be the truth. Although Doub was not a man who enjoyed being in the forefront or who courted public notice, it could not be denied that he had a notable propensity for argument. This was not an indictment nor an unusual phenomenon for it was a commonplace of the times in which the leaders of all the denominations engaged. The ante-bellum period was a time

¹⁸"A Model Methodist Preacher," Raleigh Episcopal Methodist, Sept. 29, 1869, p.1.

of religious controversy and the various confessions were constantly defending themselves against each other. The disputes indeed were not confined to the pulpits but extended to newspapers, pamphlets, and even public platforms.¹⁹

Probably the most significant, and in a major sense the most enduring, of Doub's accomplishments was begun in Greensboro in 1830 when he served the Guilford Circuit. Greensboro was nothing more than a village at the time. In 1829 it contained only 369 citizens within its corporate limits and only 115 just outside. In 1837 the total area of the town became one square mile, the courthouse being at the center.²⁰ Prior to 1830 the Methodists had been holding services in Greensboro twice monthly, alternating with the Presbyterians in using the Greensborough²¹ Male Academy Chapel. They had been served by the circuit riders; and when Doub was assigned to the Guilford Circuit, he used his energies and persuasive abilities to organize

¹⁹Johnson, Ante-bellum North Carolina, p. 445.

²⁰Ethel Stephens Arnett, Greensboro North Carolina, The County Seat of Guilford (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), p. 23.

²¹The change in the spelling of the city's name from Greensborough to Greensboro was generally accepted in the 1860's; however, the U.S. Post Office spelled it Greensboro from 1810 to 1850, then Greensborough until 1894 when it reverted to Greensboro.

the Methodists and build a church. A lot was purchased at 318 South Elm Street, the Greensboro Lodge No. 76 of the Masons laid the cornerstone, and the structure was completed in 1831. This was the first church building of any denomination within the town of Greensboro. It was approximately 30 x 50 feet, two stories high, with front and side galleries, and was built of brick. The original membership numbered sixty-four people. In 1851, it was moved to the fourth block of West Market Street and in 1892 the present structure was built at 302 West Market.²² It contains a beautiful stained glass window depicting "Christ in Gethsemane" and dedicated to the memory of Peter Doub.

Ever interested in education, Doub began in 1832 a school for the children of the members of the new Methodist church directly across the street from the church building on South Elm Street. This was the beginning of the movement which would later result in the establishment of Greensborough Female College. In establishing a school, Doub expressed the ultimate hope for a college if the institution should prove successful.²³

²²Arnett, Greensboro, p. 129.

²³Samuel Bryant Turrentine, A Romance of Education (Greensboro, N.C.: Piedmont Press, 1946), p. 23.

In January, 1833, the Greensborough Patriot announced the opening of classes of the Greensborough Female School with Miss Elizabeth Anderson in charge. The curriculum and cost were specified as follows:

Spelling, Reading and Writing	\$4.50 per session
English Grammar, Arithmetic and Geography	5.50
The same with Natural Phil- osophy, Rhetoric, Chymistry and Astronomy	8.50
Drawing and Painting	4.50
Ornamental Needlework	2.00

The superintendent of the school was Mr. I. J. M. Lindsay, and Peter Doub and C. Winborne were the managers.²⁴ Its curriculum was somewhat advanced for a mere grammar school for young ladies.

For Peter Doub to have even conceived of this school was indicative of his foresight and originality. In ante-bellum America, women had few rights and only a small number had anything more than a rudimentary education. When the nineteenth century began, North Carolinians shared two ideas concerning education for women. One was that women's chief skills should be in household matters

²⁴Greensborough Patriot, Jan. 23, 1833, p.4.

and "culinary dispositions," the other was that women should add to her household knowledge the elementary branches of an English education. As the century advanced and more schools for women appeared, the idea developed that girls should be taught more of books and less of needlework. Some even advocated not teaching household arts at all, but only those subjects like novel reading, piano playing, and dancing, which would endow young women with grace and manners.²⁵

In contrast to these ideas concerning women's education, the curriculum of the Greensborough Female School with its offerings of astronomy, philosophy and chemistry must have seemed quite bold indeed. This school served the Greensboro area for about ten years, and because of its success, plans were put in motion for the founding of Greensborough Female College in 1838, when that decade was only half spent.

Although many who were interested in higher education for women in the state either overcame or ignored prejudices against it, not everyone supported it. The Greensborough Patriot, for example, expressed its opinion on a college for ladies in an editorial on March 25, 1835.

²⁵Johnson, Ante-bellum North Carolina, p. 303.

This editorial remarked that the legislature of Kentucky had made itself ridiculous by incorporating an institution called "Van Doren's College for Young Ladies" which would grant a diploma and honorary degree of M.P.L. (Mistress of Polite Literature), M.M. (Mistress of Music), and M.I. (Mistress of Instruction). The Patriot suggested that they add an additional degree, M.F. (Master of Folly) and that the first recipient be Mr. Van Doren.²⁶

Opinions like these did not deter Doub and his committee, who presented a petition to the Methodist Conference meeting in Petersburg, Virginia, February 8, 1837, asking the delegates to establish a college for women. The petition was referred to a committee composed of Doub, Moses Brock, and Samuel S. Bryant. These men presented a resolution to the Conference of 1837, and had the satisfaction of seeing it adopted:

"Resolved, 1. That the Conference will cooperate with the Trustees of Greensboro Female School, provided that one-half the number of the board of trustees shall at all times be members of the North Carolina Conference.

"Resolved, 2. That the board thus constituted shall petition the Legislature of North Carolina for a

²⁶Greensborough Patriot, Mar. 25, 1835, p.3.

proper charter for a seminary of learning, to be called the Greensboro Female College.

"Resolved, 3. That the Conference appoint Moses Brock, Hezekiah G. Leigh, William Compton, Peter Doub, John Hank, James Reid, Bennett T. Blake, William E. Pell, and Samuel S. Bryant, trustees, to carry into effect the object contemplated by the previous resolutions.

"Resolved, 4. That the Bishop be requested to appoint an agent for the purpose of raising funds for this object."²⁷

More than a year before the charter was granted, 210 acres of land lying west of the town of Greensboro was purchased for \$3,350. Forty acres were reserved for the college building and grounds and the remainder was sold as building lots for a sum almost sufficient to recover the original purchase price. The college charter was granted December 28, 1838, thus, Greensborough Female College became the first college for women in North Carolina, the second of all colleges for women south of the Potomac and the third in the entire United States. Sixty years later a historian of the state's

²⁷ Charles Lee Raper, The Church and Private Schools of North Carolina (Greensboro, N.C.: Jos. J. Stone, Book and Job Printer, 1898), p. 203.

church-related schools declared that "Reverend Peter Doub, D.D., was perhaps the most active and influential of all those who took part in this educational enterprise."²⁸

These early years of the 1830's were very busy as well as difficult years for Doub. His many activities prevented his finding time to record them in his Journal. For several months in 1831 and 1832 "the press of business" and "a great revival of Religion in the town of Greensboro," together with his controversy with the Presbyterians, prevented his journalizing.²⁹ From April, 1832, to 1834, he found no time for his Journal at all. When he resumed his record on March 29, 1834, he wrote, "I have not recorded any events of my life for more than a year, the reasons are not such as would be useful to know."³⁰

In 1834, he was assigned to the Randolph Circuit where the press of activities did not seem to lessen. The week of May 5th he recorded as "my rest time in part," although he preached at Zoar on Monday, at New Salem on Tuesday, at Union on Wednesday, and at Ebenezer on Thursday.³¹

²⁸Ibid., p. 204.

²⁹Doub, Journal, pp. 84-87. ³⁰Ibid., p. 99.

³¹Ibid., 99.

Again his Journal is silent until August, at which time he confided to it something of the conflicts he was experiencing. After sixteen years in the itineracy, his health declined and he seemed also to have undergone a crisis in spirit and will. On August 1, 1834, he confessed to his Journal his resolution to continue in his work despite his anguish of spirit:

I find my mind this morning somewhat alive to my spiritual interest; and feel some considerable encouragement to go onward in the great cause of Godliness. . . . My heart at this time; I think, is fully fixed to serve my God the remainder of my days. I have for some considerable time not enjoyed the smiles of God as I have in former days. My mind has, by various causes been much distracted and distressed; difficulties innumerable have crowded around my path, so that I have found this year thus far, the most serious and distressing that I have ever witnessed. Sometimes the clouds which hang over me seem ready to disperse, and some faint beams of light break through here and there; but soon, alas! too soon, they overspread my sky again and all my hopes are blasted as in a moment. Oh thou searcher of hearts, do thou interpose; Do thou cause the shadows to fly away. My prospects to brighten, my hopes to revive, my confidence to become firm and unwavering; so that I may be able to pass thro' things temporal, so as not lose sight of things which are eternal.³²

During this period of doubt and distress, there seemed to be no pause in his preaching engagements, and

³²Ibid., pp. 99-100.

by December of 1834, he had arrived at a more secure state of mind. He wrote:

My mind has become more settled than it has been the greater part of the year; and I think my prospect now is good for enjoying more than I have for several years past. I find that I am more given up to the work of the ministry than I have been for some considerable time; . . . I am now making my arrangements, in my temporal affairs, so that hereafter they may not interfere with my duty, on any circuit to which I may be appointed. Such have been my difficulties for several years past in these respects, that I have not been able to do as I would have desired: but I have done the best I could under the peculiar circumstances I was labouring.³³

Part of the stress and strain of the life of the circuit rider derived from the problem of supporting himself; and if he had a family, the burden was often severe. Doub had married in 1821 and soon had a young and growing family. He and his wife were to have a total of seven children. In 1816, the General Conference, meeting at Baltimore, agreed to pay its married preachers \$200 a year plus \$24 for each child under fourteen years of age. But apparently, Doub did not always receive even this modest stipend. A eulogy published after his death said that he "bore hardship, neglect and poverty, out of

³³Ibid., p. 129.

sheer love for the itinerant work, never having received with few exceptions from the church even the small disciplinary allowance to which he was entitled."³⁴

At the time he entered the ministry, he had arranged with his brother to work his share of the farm, and from this he received some income. This arrangement lasted for twenty-five years. There are also in his personal letters to his brother Michael allusions to what he called his "temporal affairs." In January, 1831, he wrote him concerning purchases of leather hides by the hundred. He did not say how they would be used, but he did mention what profit he could make. Again he wrote to his brother two letters in 1839 in which he discussed at length the silk-growing business and said he could furnish him with from three to five thousand buds at two and one-half cents per bud.³⁵

These are but a few illustrations of activities in which Doub engaged to support his family, but he tried to manage these affairs in a way that would not interfere with the work of his itineracy.

³⁴Raleigh Episcopal Methodist, Sept. 29, 1869, p.1.

³⁵Letters, Peter Doub to Michael Doub, Jan. 31, 1831; Sept. 12, 1839; Dec. 4, 1839, Duke University, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, William C. Doub Papers, 1778-1917.

Doub no longer kept his Journal after 1834, although he was then only in mid-career. He spent the next three years on the Tar River and Caswell Circuits and the following nine years on Districts. In 1843, he went as a delegate to the General Conference in New York. He served on the important committees on Slavery and Itineracy. It was during this Conference that the fateful cases were tried which resulted in the separation of the southern churches from the General Conference.

When the Methodist Episcopal church was organized in 1784, the action taken disapproved of slavery, but this was unwelcome to the Conference and the execution of the Minutes was suspended the following year. Various adjustments were attempted at succeeding conferences; and although in 1812 the right to make decisions regarding slavery was given to the Annual Conferences, this prerogative was withdrawn by 1820, and the General Conference again took over the decisions regarding chattel servitude. The developing sectionalism, especially regarding slavery, was affecting Southern opinion, and "As cotton and slavery fastened themselves upon southern society, the official attitude of the church began to change bringing

in new doctrines and new polity fashioned to meet demands of its members."³⁶

This was much in evidence in the cases brought before the 1844 Conference. A member of the Baltimore Annual Conference had been tried and suspended because his wife owned slaves. Although Maryland did not allow emancipation, the General Conference upheld the action of the Baltimore Annual Conference. A Bishop Andrews was also dismissed from the Episcopacy because he had married a Georgia woman who owned slaves. The Southern delegates were indignant and declared they could no longer remain under the supervision of the General Conference. Efforts at compromise failed, and fifty-three of the southern members presented a protest against the action of the General Conference. This action was approved by the North Carolina Conference. Doub was elected as a delegate to the convention of the Southern church held at Louisville, Kentucky, in May 1845, where the name for the Southern organization was debated. He served on the Committee on Organization and suggested the name "Methodist Episcopal

³⁶Walter Brownlow Posey, "Influence of Slavery Upon the Methodist Church in the Early South and Southwest," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XVII (Mar. 1931), p. 539.

Church, South," and it was adopted by the Conference. Doub also attended the General Conference of this church on May 1, 1846, at Pittsburg, Virginia, where the organization of the Southern branch of the now divided Methodist church was completed.

These travels, meetings and responsibilities took their toll of his health, for he was compelled to withdraw from his work and rest during 1847. He superintended the operations of a small farm and preached very little that year. His first effort was to regain his health, which was sufficiently improved by the end of the year to enable him to accept an appointment to Greensboro in 1848. The next two years were spent on the Henderson Circuit, and in 1851 and 1852 he served as pastor of the Edenton Street Church in Raleigh. During at least part of the latter tenure, he was in charge of the Mission Chapel and the African Mission. He usually preached three times on Sunday, in addition to other duties. It was here that he preached his series of sermons on Baptism and Communion, a subject which had long engaged his interest and study. Here again he was involved in doctrinal disputation, for these were in answer to a series preached by a Baptist minister. Doub's sermons were

published in pamphlet form. A copy made its way to Missouri and fell into the hands of a newly converted young man, the son of a pious Baptist woman. He was having doubts about baptism, but this pamphlet settled all his questions. The young man was E. M. Marvin, later to become Bishop Marvin of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.³⁷

A new experience came to Doub in 1852. The Temperance Society was organized in North Carolina as early as 1831, a part of the many-sided reform movements which was spreading throughout the country. The Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance met in Salisbury in 1852 and elected Doub as a lecturer in North Carolina. He spent 1853 in this capacity, preaching fifty-one sermons and delivering several hundred lectures over much of the state. Temperance was the one reform for which churches worked hardest, but there was much opposition to their efforts.

In 1854, Doub served the Salisbury District and in 1855 was assigned to a church in Chapel Hill. On July 15

³⁷Thomas M. Finney, The Life and Labors of Enoch Mather Marvin, Late Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (St. Louis: James M. Chambers, 1881), pp. 68-69.

of this year, he was awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree by Normal College, soon to become Trinity College. Following this honor, he served eight additional years on the itineracy before returning to Greensboro in 1864 where he devoted three years to the Greensboro District. Doub was now seventy years old. His days as an itinerant were over, but a new career opened when he was invited to join the faculty of Trinity College, where he lectured as Professor of Biblical Literature from 1867 to 1869.

as a Professor. In all this half century he was un-
assigned for only one year, when he withdrew from active
service to regain his wakened health.

What manner of man was this who had worked so
long to improve the quality of religious life and of
education in North Carolina prior to the civil war?

Physically, Peter Doub was a very large man, more
than six feet tall, with broad shoulders and chest, high
forehead and thick bones, firmly set jaw and a thoughtful
facial expression. But it was not his commanding port-
and appearance that gave him the strength and perseverance
which invested his life with significance and accomplish-
ment.

CHAPTER V

MIND AND PERSONALITY

The progress from the old field school of North Carolina to a Trinity College Professorship of Biblical Literature was a journey of more than fifty years for Peter Doub. Of this time, forty-two years were spent in actual travels on the Methodist circuits and districts, four at stations, one as a Temperance lecturer and three as a Professor. In all this half century he was unassigned for only one year, when he withdrew from active service to regain his broken health.

What manner of man was this who had worked so long to improve the quality of religious life and of education in North Carolina prior to the Civil War?

Physically, Peter Doub was a very large man, more than six feet tall, with broad shoulders and chest, high forehead and cheek bones, firmly set lips and a thoughtful facial expression. But it was not his commanding physical appearance that gave him the strength and perseverance which invested his life with significance and accomplishment.

It is obvious that his German background of order, stability and constraint instilled in him the self discipline upon which so much of his activity depended.

Although the Methodists did not require an educated clergy, Doub required it of himself. He had doubts as to the need for theological seminaries to train ministers, but he did favor some plan to give young ministers a good English education and the fundamentals of Christian Theology. The rest he preferred to pursue on his own. He wrote:

As to thorough training in the science of theology, that is a matter than can only be compassed by diligent study and daily practice. In that regard he thinks self tuition is one of the greatest and best teachers. There can be no limits assigned to the range of study nor to the time such study is pursued. A life is too short.¹

This basic attitude toward learning was one of the personal characteristics which made Doub's life and work so meaningful. It was reflected in much of his work. He never ceased to study and learn; he valued his books. When it was necessary to leave a collection with his brother, Michael, he made a list of them:

¹Doub, Autobiography, p. 68.

A List of Books Left in the Hands of Michael
Doub for safe keeping. Peter Doub

- 1 sett of Dr. Clarke Commen [tary]
- 1 sett of Predeaux
- 2 volumes Blairs sermons
- 1 Chalmers sermons
- 1 Smiths - lectures
- 1 Vol. of Wesleys Sermons
- 1 Simpson of the Deity of Christ
- 1 Fletcher and Benson of the Deity
- 1 Lays sermons
- 1 Drew on the resurrection
- 1 Portrait of St. Paul
- 1 Blairs lectures
- 1 Doctrinal tracts
- 1 Watts on the Mind
- 1 Solitude Sweetened
- 1 Christian Resolutions
- 1 Dr. Youngs Night Thoughts
- 1 Milton's Paradise Lost
- 1 Bible, holy, 1 Testament
- 1 Hymn Book
- 1 Walker's Dictionary
- 1 Discipline
- 1 Murrays Grammar
- 1 Do, exercises
- 1 Do, abridged
- 1 pamphlet on the end of the world
- 1 do on the Trinity
- 1 Edwards on Baptism
- 1 Jarrett on Baptism
- 2 more on Baptism
- 1 Clarkes letters to the preachers
- 1 Clarkes sermon on faith
- 1 Tract on Missionary and Bible
- 1 Gastons Collections

By examining this list, one may observe that Doub did not depend solely upon divine inspiration for sermon material.

Nor did he rely exclusively on his books, for he added to his knowledge gained from them his own independent thinking and reasoning powers.

Although he spent almost his entire career traveling, he seems to have been untouched by the beauties of field or sky, bird or animal. One searches his writings in vain for evidence of such aesthetic propensities. His mind was given over to abstractions, to the philosophical, the theological, the doctrinal, and to the arrangements of these in orderly, logical form. He set up his major premises and, supported by Scripture, built up his ponderous doctrinal formulations.

In 1866 a contemporary, under the by-line of "Senex" published a pithy description of Doub's style:

Dr. Doub's manner is argumentative, and the concatenation of his thoughts so dependent, that considerable mental effort is necessary to follow him through a discourse. If your mind unfortunately trips when he is laying down his premises, you had as well go to sleep for the sermon is lost, so far as you are concerned. And if you admit his premises, his conclusions are usually inevitable.

.....
 His words are selected with judgment, and perspicuity and propriety duly observed. His sentences, for the most part are lengthy, and like his thoughts and person, ponderous. They, perhaps, exhibit too much of the student to suit the masses.²

²The Enterprise (Raleigh, N.C.), Apr. 2, 1866, p. 1.

He pursued each topic in all its ramifications and tried not to leave any worthy point unnoticed. At one service he preached for two and one-half hours and then informed his hearers he would continue his topic at the evening service; and on some future day after considering it more thoroughly, he hoped to preach a third sermon on the same subject.³

In spite of the protracted, erudite nature of his sermons, his hearers were willing to listen and try to follow, for he brought to these efforts not only scholarship and reasoning power but the appeal of his own sincere, religious experience.

Although Dr. Doub had a commanding appearance, a great facility with words, and power and clarity as a speaker, he was by nature reticent. In contrast to his audacity in argument and debate was his innate humility. He did not belong to that rare category of men called leaders. He was a follower of what he defined as the "true call" to man, "an inward persuasion that he is required to imploy [sic] his gifts whatever they

³Plyler and Plyler, "Peter Doub," pp. 208-209.

may be in some special and extraordinary service in which he may be personally and generally useful to society."⁴ He rarely spoke from the platform at either the General or Annual Conferences, although he served on many important committees and was recognized as a valuable member. Writing, after forty-eight years in the ministry, of his early timidity, he revealed that it was still with him although its nature had changed.

By some cause which he has not been able to this day to understand, he has always felt unwilling to press himself into notice on any occasion; and finds even now the same feeling in almost every attempt in his public exercises. It is true, it is not now what it was then. Then, it was fear in reality, now, it is the consciousness of the greatness of the work and his unfitness for it.⁵

His timidity had been transformed into humility and modesty.

Doub wrote very little concerning his personal life as an adult. He wrote a summary account of his childhood and youth in his autobiography, but his writings of adulthood were concerned in the main with the intellectual, theological, and spiritual issues that engaged his heart

⁴Doub, Autobiography, p. 71.

⁵Peter Doub, "Historical Incidents," The Enterprise (Raleigh, N.C.), June 25, 1866, p. 1.

and mind. These, no doubt, left him little time to write about himself, and his self-abnegation would, in any case, have kept his own personal affairs far in the background. But many of his contemporaries have written their impressions of him. A fellow minister, Brantley York, wrote of him in a letter:

The general character of Dr. Doub's preaching was argumentative: he was a bold and strong defender of the Armenian faith, occasionally paying his compliments to Calvinism, and all other isms, which, as he thought, were not sustained by the teachings of the Bible. His sermons, though generally long, were instructive and interesting and their effects were sometimes overwhelming.

.....
 Though the Dr. Doub was somewhat tenacious of his own opinions, yet, in his social intercourse, he was bland and affable.⁶

Of his personal and private habits and idiosyncrasies little is known, but his daughter-in-law has provided a small glimpse.

His habits of life were methodical - even to the putting on of his wearing apparel - his collar must allow both hands to pass easily between it and his throat - his 'neckcloth' was a bit of soft muslin made and laundered by the good wife - his stocking, knitted of homespun flax by the same untiring helpmeet must reach above the knee and the

⁶Letter, Brantley York to Reverend Marquis L. Wood, Feb. 5, 1875, Duke University, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, North Carolina Conference Historical Sketches, Methodist Episcopal Church Papers.

upper part turn down over the calves. . . .
 He ate lightly at all times, eliminating
 butter from his fare altogether. Once he
 said to me, "I could eat everything on your
 supper table if I did not know that a big
 man should not indulge a big appetite."

.
 We knew he was not to be interrupted in his
 studies for any ordinary occurrence - the
 extraordinary one of a visit from his only
 daughter caused him to say, "I wish her
 arrival had been delayed an hour, I was in
 the midst of an argument."

.
 He was tender as a mother - even the family
 pets shared his kindness. The kitten would
 sleep in his lap and bunny squirrel seek a
 warm place in the flap of his coat. After
 some of his great sermons, he would come
 into the home and play with the children
 like a boy. "Fine relaxation," he would
 say, "and they enjoy it so."⁷

⁷Plyler, M[arion] T., "Peter Doub, Itinerant of
 Heroic Days," Historical Papers, Series IX (Durham, N.C.:
 The Trinity College Historical Society and The North
 Carolina Conference Historical Society, 1912), pp. 33,
 44, 49.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The role which Methodism has played in American Society has never been understood, nor its contributions historically assessed and recognized, "Yet no single force," wrote the leading historian of American religion, "had more to do with bringing order out of frontier chaos than the Methodist circuit rider, and among no other class of men was the heroic element more finely displayed."¹

Peter Doub belonged to this valiant company of men who were willing to spend themselves physically and to submit themselves and their families to loneliness and deprivation with so little, if any, financial remuneration, in order to lift the quality of life, both spiritually and socially, of the early American communities.

Not every home was open to the itinerant, but those which received him considered his overnight visits a special event in their lives. He brought news of other places he had visited, and in many ways in conversation before the fireside, he broadened the narrow vistas of

¹Sweet, The Methodists, p. 3.

their lives. His own personal refinement in manners, the moral standards he represented, had an elevating effect. Was not the expected visit of the minister a time to clean the house and children and to dress and behave as befitted so auspicious an occasion?

As the circuit rider organized churches in widely scattered communities, he brought people together for high moral purposes. Not only did he preach a long and earnest sermon; he was responsible for the class session afterward, which all members of the Methodist Society were required to attend. The minister was also in charge of the church court in which church members were tried for alleged misconduct and expelled if found guilty. The church had no legal authority to compel people to submit to these trials; community opinion alone supported them. Not to appear for a trial was always a sure admission of guilt in the eyes of the people. These varied activities of the circuit rider had a great moral, educational and social influence upon the early communities of the state.

Peter Doub rode the circuits and the districts for forty-two years, serving his widely scattered flock

in these many ways. Having been reared in the yeomanry, he understood the ways and needs of ordinary country folk. He endeavored to meet his appointments on time, even though, as happened on occasion, his horse might die on the way and he was reduced to proceeding on foot. Sometimes he met with a congregation of only ten people, sometimes a large gathering. By occasion, he preached "with little feeling" or "with great liberty"; but on he pressed, bringing to the people the Arminian message of free will and free grace, individual responsibility, a belief so congruent and acceptable to their efforts to build a new life. The enormity of this task was enough to discourage all but the most stalwart of clergymen. Concerning his work, Doub wrote after forty-eight years in the ministry: "Although he has often-time been extremely wearied and tired in the work, yet, he has never seen a moment that he felt tired of it."²

This labor of the Methodists in which Doub was engaged, so little known at the beginning of the century, had made enough impact in North Carolina to impress Judge Gaston, a Roman Catholic and a contemporary

²Doub, The Enterprise (Raleigh, N.C.), June 25, 1866, p.1.

of Doub, to say that "the Methodist ministry had done more to improve the society of the rural districts than any other class of men, or any other class of agencies that had ever been brought to bear on this subject."³ Formal data cannot measure the hope, the courage, the endurance, or the rigorous moral standards, which the circuit rider brought to his people.

Although the early Methodists were more committed to evangelizing than to education, they were from the beginning impressive educational forces in their own right. Doub's interest in education did not come merely from the course of study prescribed for the ministers by the General Conference; it was part of his earliest training at home and it was a vital part of his ministry to the people of North Carolina. And this was, it should be remembered, a period when the majority of the people were indifferent to education. Not waiting for the slow passage of a public education bill in North Carolina, he used his influence to aid the subscription school. In a letter to his brother, Michael, in 1835, he recommended a Mr. Perry as a teacher in his

³Grissom, History of Methodism in North Carolina, pp. 133-134.

neighborhood and added, "I beseech you to use your utmost to get him there."⁴

As soon as the first Methodist church in Greensboro was established under his supervision, he provided a school across the street for the children of its members, expressing at that time the hope for a college for women. When this was realized in the Greensborough Female College in 1838, there was still no public education system in North Carolina. And when Doub expressed his hope for a college, there was not yet in the United States a college for women.⁵

It is difficult to contemplate the amount of effort and self-discipline which went into Dr. Doub's own self education. Beginning with his "very laborious course of Reading" in 1819, he came to be recognized by his colleagues as the finest theologian in his Conference.⁶

⁴Letter, Peter Doub to Michael Doub, Aug. 3, 1835, Duke University, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, William C. Doub Papers, 1778-1917.

⁵Turrentine, A Romance of Education, p. 26. (Mount Holyoke was established in 1837, at South Hadley, Massachusetts, as the first college for women in America, four years after Doub launched the movement for a college at Greensboro.)

⁶Plyler, "Peter Doub, Itinerant of Heroic Days." p. 48.

When Doub was seventy years old a Raleigh publication in an article concerning him, made this comment:

As a theologian, he has not perhaps his superior in the southern country. I once heard an old minister of intelligence remark, that he could discover from the sermons of most men, their favorite authors, and that he found little difficulty in tracing their peculiar views to their proper source; but the Dr's reading was so extensive and multifarious, that he was always at a loss to know what authors were his favorites.⁷

That Doub should end his career as a Professor of Biblical Literature was a fitting climax to a life given to the Christian ministry and to education, for there was in this last activity a fusion of his two devotions. Doub died August 26, 1869, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Charles G. Yates, of Greensboro. His last message to the Conference was, "Tell my brethren of the Conference that if I am alive, I am working my way to the skies; if I am dead, I am alive."

His funeral service was preached by two Methodist pastors and a Presbyterian minister. The business of the town was generally suspended and a deep solemnity pervaded the community.⁸

⁷The Enterprise, Apr. 2, 1866, p. 1.

⁸Episcopal Methodist (Raleigh, N.C.), Sept. 1, 1869, p. 2.

"Peter Doub, sturdy, unaffected, saintly, manly, human, with a capacious brain full of great thoughts and a heart full of love to God and man, stands before us the impersonation of simplicity, purity, and Christian nobility: a typical North Carolina Methodist preacher of the earlier times."⁹

⁹Fitzgerald, "Peter Doub," p. 294.

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