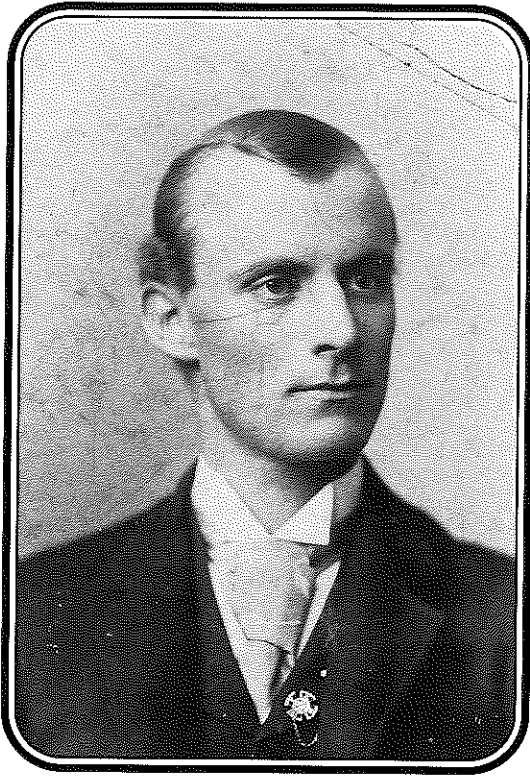


## ...Through Our Heritage



Rev. Edgar Tufts

came out specifically to make "a most earnest plea for the starving people of the Near East," and to take up an offering "in behalf of the Armenians." (*The Pinnacles* Mar., 1923)

The ministers who followed continued to serve as pastor to the students at Lees-McRae and the children at Grandfather Home. In 1928, the Edgar Tufts Memorial Association (ETMA) asked the church to have evangelistic services "to the end that the 34 non-church members of the student body of Lees-McRae Institute might be brought into the church." (*Minutes ETMA* 4-26-28) For many years the church's pastors were also responsible for a number of small outpost chapels. As transportation improved, most of these were closed. But our very first (1903) outpost Sunday School, which became Arbor Dale, continued to grow and was organized as a church in 1958. The Arbor Dale and Banner Elk Churches shared a minister until the younger church was ready to assume separate leadership in 1985. Arbor Dale is now a thriving Presbyterian Church in this community.

Today one of our most exciting outreaches is our partnership with a small Guatemalan Church, Arca de Noé. Two people from our church, Tom Phillips and Barbara Hosbein, visited Arca de Noé in 1997. Their passionate reports have inspired our members to continue into the future with this mutually nourishing relationship.

Our first roll of members was lost! We do not have the record of those 22 people who organized the Banner Elk Presbyterian Church in 1893. We know that they came together in response to evangelistic services held by Dr. R.P. Pell, a Presbyterian minister.

Two years later a young ministerial student was sent to the mountain area for the summer. Edgar Tufts soon understood his permanent calling to be here, where he became pastor to small churches for the rest of his life, as well as the founder of three institutions. Our first little frame church was built during his two summers here as a student. Later, in 1914, with the help of the entire community, Mr. Tufts oversaw the construction of the our present stone sanctuary.

### MISSION-ORIENTATION

In faithful response to the needs of people around him, Rev. Edgar Tufts led his congregation to move continually into new areas of ministry. Although the church itself was a mission project, it was able to reach out to the developing school, hospital, and orphanage that Tufts began in Banner Elk. In turn, the church was enriched by the influx of Christian teachers and medical personnel who came here to work.

The three institutions were always an integral part of our church's life. But Mr. Tufts never allowed the church to focus only on local needs. The last time that Edgar Tufts was in our church was December 26, 1922, after he had already contracted the influenza that would soon cause his death. He

### Assurance

Phil. 1:6

When 'twas thy Holy Spirit came  
Into my heart with quick'ning power  
And set aglow a sacred flame  
I cannot tell the day or hour,

Nor why it is thy Spirit chose  
To make a home within my breast  
And drive away my deadly foes  
Of sin and lust, and give me rest.

But this I know; the work begun  
By Thee will never cease nor wane,  
As long as God's immortal Son  
As King of Kings, Shall live and reign.

No fear of loss, the work is thine,  
And thine alone forevermore!  
No fear of death, thy light shall shine  
To guide my way to heaven's shore!

EDGAR TUFTS