

# I Remember Old Tuscaloosa

By Fred Maxwell -

THE FIRST Episcopal Church in Alabama was established in Mobile in 1826 (circa). The second Episcopal Church was established in Tuscaloosa in 1827.

The first Episcopal bishop of Alabama was the Rt. Rev. Nicholas Hamner Cobbs, who was ordained in 1844.

Bishop Cobbs chose the Tuscaloosa Christ Church as his cathedral church because of being centrally located statewide, river transportation and the seat of the Alabama capitol (1826-1846).

Bishop Cobbs moved to Tuscaloosa in 1845 and resided in a two-story antebellum residence located about 500 yards northwest of the main entrance to Stillman College. This residence was demolished just a few years ago.

On one occasion the bishop was making a parochial call to Mobile and found it necessary to catch the river steamboat at Millwood (near Greensboro) on account of low water on the river.

In those days if a traveler could make connection between the stage coach and steamboat within two days he felt that he had made close connections. (Today many people become vexed if they miss one section of a revolving door.)

After the trip the bishop told the Millwood Tavern owner what a pleasant sojourn he enjoyed on his trip emphasizing the good wild game food of turkey, venison, quail and squirrel.

Tavern owner: "I suppose the tavern operator gave you the usual 50 per cent discount granted to gentlemen of the cloth?"

Bishop: "Well, no, he charged me full fare — but it was worth it."

The owner contacted the operator a few days later and asked "why didn't you give Bishop Cobbs the 50 per cent discount allowed ministers?"

The operator replied: "Was he the man that wore a black suit with his collar on hind part before?"

Owner: "Yes."

Operator: "I asked if he was a Baptist and he said no. I asked him if he was a Methodist and he said no. You did not tell me to give a discount to Whigs, Democrats or Episcopalians so I charged him full fare."

GRAPHIC April 8, 1971