

JOSEPH O'DANIEL, M.D., D.D.

(Born February 28, 1808---Died December 21, 1852)

(Buried Olney Presbyterian Church Cemetery)

(At Union Winter of 1842---December 21, 1852)

Joseph O'Daniel was born in York County, South Carolina in 1808, the son of Daniel and Mary Powell O'Daniel. The O'Daniel family was originally from Ireland, the land of many York County pioneers. Preaching by Independent Presbyterian Church (IPC) ministers was held frequently in their home. In his early life he was a school teacher and later studied the classics.

During the great revival of 1832 in York County, Joseph O'Daniel sensed a call into the gospel ministry to share God's salvation to all. He was licensed to preach on June 14, 1834 in the Harmony IPC, outside of Yorkville, S.C. He then held the honorable position of being elected moderator of the 13th Session of the General Convention of the IPC, held at Olney IPC.

Joseph O'Daniel later gave his trial sermon at the Yorkville IPC in early August of 1837, and upon the successful delivery was ordained at the Olney IPC on August 7, 1837 as a Minister of the Gospel. He became their pastor and also the pastor of the newly organized Mill Creek IPC, an Olney chapel. O'Daniel, a slaveowner, also represented a new change within the denomination: from anti-slavery to a 'quiet, pro-slavery' stance. As he began his ministry in 1837, he also began his family.

O'Daniel had been married just four months prior to his ordination. Joseph and Esther L. Armstrong O'Daniel had two sons in 1838 and 1839, each dying in the year of their birth. Even though Joseph and Esther lived on Turkey Creek in south York County where other IPC churches abound, the infants were buried at Bethel (regular) Presbyterian Church, between the two O'Daniel charges of Mill Creek and Olney.

In 1841 William J. O'Daniel was born to Joseph and Esther O'Daniel. He did not marry and was later killed on October 11, 1863 at Stevensburg, Virginia, fighting for the Confederacy. In 1843 Cornelius M. O'Daniel was born. In 1861 he bought his parent's land near Olney, then joined the Confederacy and died of disease at Front Royal, Virginia on October 26, 1862.

In 1845 Joseph Leander O'Daniel was born, about the same time that Joseph and Esther moved from York County, S.C. to Gaston County, N.C., near Olney. The last son, Laban E. O'Daniel was born in 1848, but never married. Their only daughter was Mary J. O'Daniel, born in 1850. Joseph L. (age 16), Laban E. (13) and Mary J. (11) moved to Arkansas in 1861 with their re-wed mother (Esther L.A. O'Daniel Mendenhall).

Joseph O'Daniel stopped preaching at Mill Creek about 1841, when the Mill Creek Baptist Church is organized. One-third of the Mill Creek Presbyterians came across the state line in the winter of 1842, when Union began. A log church was built, but the 'union' arrangement of sharing ministers and the building may have hindered the organizational process, which was eight years later! Camp Meetings were held, probably each October, with Rev. R.Y. Russel present at the 1851 meeting.

He also had the honor, with Union IPC, of hosting the 28th General Convention. But 16 months later, on December 21, 1852, O'Daniel died of a 'painful and protracted illness.' He practiced medicine to support his family, yet as a physician, he evidently could not help himself. As a Doctor of Divinity, he could only turn to God. His obituary stated his preaching was 'close and logical.'

Pastorates: Olney IPC (1837-1852), Mill Creek IPC (1837-1841), Union IPC (1842-1852), and Hephzibah IPC (1843-1852)