

Boger, George ^[1]

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by Robert W. Delp, 1979

15 Dec. 1782–19 June 1865

George Boger, German Reformed minister, was born in Cabarrus County ^[2]. His grandfather, Mathias, emigrated from the Palatinate in 1732 and settled in Lancaster County, Pa. His parents, Jacob Boger (12 Oct. 1745–25 Dec. 1831) and Barbara Loeffler (Dec. 1750–15 Apr. 1819) of Berks County, Pa., moved to North Carolina and located on Buffalo Creek in the present Cabarrus County. Here Boger was baptized by the Reverend Samuel Suther ^[3], Swiss immigrant and pastor to early German Reformed congregations in North and South Carolina. He attended schools conducted by German masters until his fourteenth year, when he studied briefly with John Yeoman, who conducted an English school. In his sixteenth year, Boger was prepared for church membership by the Reverend Samuel Weyberg, pastor of Reformed churches in Cabarrus and Rowan ^[4] counties. He was confirmed 12 May 1799 and soon began to study for the ministry under Reformed and Lutheran ^[5] clergymen, while supplying pulpits of various Reformed churches until his ordination on 6 Mar. 1803 at Mt. Zion (Savitz) Church in the present China Grove.

Among the churches served by Boger were Mt. Zion (Savitz), China Grove (1802–30); Bethany, Davidson County ^[6] (1803–12); Bethel (Bear Creek), Stanly County ^[7] (1806–30); Emmanuel, Davidson County (1812–27); Grace (Lower Stone), Rowan County ^[4] (1803–30); New Gilead (Cold Water), Cabarrus County (1803–30). He also visited Reformed congregations in South Carolina. For a period after 1812 he was the only ordained minister of his denomination in North Carolina. The demand for worship services in the English language was later voiced in the churches, and Boger, who preached in German, relinquished his pastoral responsibilities to the Reverend Daniel B. Lerch in 1830. He continued, however, to play a significant role in the German Reformed church in North Carolina, and as a minister without charge he cared for the spiritual needs of Reformed congregations having no pastor. He was also active in the North Carolina Classis of the Reformed church and frequently delivered sermons in the German language at its annual meetings. He was elected treasurer of Classis in 1832 and was its representative at the meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod ^[8] of North Carolina in 1838. Moreover, he accepted appointments on committees of Classis to ordain ministers, examine candidates for ministerial standing, and report on the state of religion in the churches. Advancing years and declining health led him to retire from the ministry completely in 1847.

Because of his dedication to the church, "Father" Boger was revered as a loving, gentle, and patient servant of God. Upon the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the organization of the North Carolina Classis in 1841, the Reverend John Lantz's churches in Rowan and Cabarrus counties affirmed their determination to raise fifteen hundred dollars, to be called the "Boger Beneficiaryship" in honor of their former pastor. Many years later he was memorialized in the organization of Boger Reformed Church at Watts Cross Roads in Cabarrus County, on 29 Oct. 1905. The church edifice, dedicated 29 Apr. 1906, was constructed on land originally owned by Boger and donated by Mrs. Caroline Boger to commemorate him.

Boger was married three times: in 1806 to Elizabeth Hagler, who died in 1809, leaving no children; in 1810 to Elizabeth Barnhardt, who died in 1836, leaving ten children; in 1837 to Elizabeth File, who became the mother of two children. Following his death in Rowan County, Boger's funeral was conducted by the Reverend J. B. Anthony, and he was buried in the cemetery of historic Grace (Lower Stone) Church.

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[Delp, Robert W.](#) ^[18]

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