

Mitchell, John ^[1]

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by John R. Jordan, Jr., 1991

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John Mitchell, Baptist clergyman, educator, benefactor of denominational causes, colporteur of religious tracts, and missionary in the Confederate army, was born in [Bertie County](#) ^[2], the son of Mary Thomas and James Saunders Mitchell, a state senator in 1842. He was graduated from [Wake Forest College](#) ^[3] in 1852 and for the remainder of his life was associated with the school in one way or another. He continued his education at various theological institutions. In 1855 he returned to Wake Forest as financial agent and directed the raising of funds for an endowment. He next undertook a preaching mission and served as pastor of churches in Greensboro, Hillsborough, and Asheville. For two periods he was pastor at the Ahoskie Baptist Church.

Mitchell was keenly aware of his family's tradition in the fields of Christian education and charitable giving. He contributed generously to the Mills Home [Baptist Orphanage](#) ^[4] in Thomasville and provided funds to erect one of its buildings, which later was named in his honor. He was one of two primary donors in the construction of Wake Forest College Hospital and made numerous other gifts to the college in funds and services. In addition, he was a frequent contributor to [Chowan College](#) ^[5], of which he was a trustee. Because of his generosity to Chowan College, a cottage there was reserved for his use. He also served as a trustee of [Wake Forest College](#) ^[3].

Baptist historians applied the title "the Beloved Disciple" to Mitchell because of his work and gifts; he was further described as devout, tolerant, and kind, with the tranquility of an Aquinas. Following his active ministry, Mitchell served as secretary of the Baptist Board of Education and finally returned to his father's plantation in Bertie County, where he died. He never married.

References:

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