

FORMER SLAVE PASSES; WELL-KNOWN IN STATE

Ellen Whitehurst Helped
Found Elizabeth City Church;
Dies in New York

Elizabeth City, Sept. 15.—One of the last links that bind the community to its ante bellum days was severed last week when Ellen Cook Whitehurst, born in the slave quarters attached to the Cook residence on Church Street in 1856, died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Mary Cook Long, in New York and was buried here after services in St. Phillips Church, conducted by the Rev. S. N. Griffith. The Rev. George F. Hill conducted the services at the graveside which were attended by representatives of many older local families.

Ellen Cook Whitehurst never sensed that she was "free" because she never felt that she was a slave, although technically she was born into that estate. For more than 50 years she continued in the service of families descended from the Cooks. She was a great cook, and the dining room of the Griffin family here became and remained famous for its hospitality, while she presided over its kitchen.

But Ellen Cook Whitehurst was much more than a servant. She was the wife of Walter Whitehurst, who many older citizens will remember, and she was the mother of six children. She was, when she died, the oldest member of Christ Church here, having been confirmed in that faith when she was very young, when whites and Negroes worshipped together.

Afterward she was active in the organization of St. Phillips Episcopal Church for Negro people here, and as long as she lived was a useful and influential member. Communicants remember that she was even sexton to the church, and did everything but preach. Her children she raised to be useful citizens. One daughter, Mrs. Cora Whitehurst Brown, has for many years been a member of the Negro school teaching staff here. Three daughters hold similar posts in New York, where she moved 20 years ago.

Among those who attended the funeral services were William Skinner, senior warden of Christ Church, representing the parish, Mayor Jerome B. Flora, Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Melick and Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Duff.