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THE PATH FINDER

The Historical Preservation Journal of Westlake

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2	<i>The View From the Timbers</i> by Joyce Gibson Roach
5	<i>From the Beginning: A Circle of Churches</i>
6	<i>A History of Lonesome Dove Baptist Church</i> by Betty Tanner & Frances Hogue
8	<i>Map; Northeast Tarrant County, 1846-1920</i> by E. I. Wiesman
13	<i>The Church at the Hed of B'ar Creek</i> by David Brown
22	<i>White's Chapel History</i>
26	<i>Primitive Baptists</i>
30	<i>Pleasant Hill Advent Church</i> Southlake
32	<i>Thomas Easter Cemetery</i> by Michael Peterson
34	<i>"Will The Circle Be Unbroken"</i>
36	<i>First Baptist Church, Keller</i>
39	<i>Cumberland Presbyterian, Keller</i> by Mrs. Guy Foster
39	<i>Methodist Church, Keller</i>
40	<i>Membership in Westlake Historical Preservation Society</i>
IBC	<i>Acknowledgements</i>

The view from the Timbers . . .

EDITOR'S PAGE

Conventional wisdom persuades us that religion and politics can be dangerous topics at social gatherings—sometimes at religious and political conclaves, too. In fact, such talk can lead from merely disgruntled to fisticuffs—at least in the past. The journal's theme in this issue is early churches, and it is impossible to neglect the reason for those buildings—the practice of religion. My view is from the safe distance the past affords, however, and there is no reason not to raise my voice in the old song, "Give me that old time religion; it's good enough for me." In fact, I've sung a lot of the old songs as the journal is being put together—"The Old Rugged Cross," "Just As I Am," "Almost Persuaded," "Onward Christian Soldiers" and the list goes on and on.

Not only singing, but memories of revivals and a few camp meetings have enthused me for the subject. I am reminded of my age and feel fortunate to have known the era when church itself—as well as the ancillary occasions such as revivals (for me, at *every* church in town and even other towns close by, *every* summer), singing schools, camp meetings, Sunday School, Sunday evening services, Wednesday night "Prayer Meeting," mission study, covered dish suppers, church camp at some out-of-town location, trips to hear important men of religion such as Billy Graham—gave extra opportunities for education beyond the school room in music, geography, speech, good manners, acceptable group behavior. All gave me a glimpse of a wider world beyond the confines of the rural, West Texas town of Jacksboro. The skills acquired there were useful in the larger world, albeit my larger world was the city of Fort Worth some sixty-five, *long* miles away.

But I digress. A bit of frontier history as it concerns religious practices, long before my time, is in order. That our nation was founded by those escaping religious persecution, is well known. One scholar



Arthur McWhirter

notes, "The religion of the new American republic was evangelicalism, which, between 1800 and the Civil War, was the 'grand absorbing theme' of American religious life."¹ It was a period when several denominations were formed, but whatever the names chosen by the groups, they had in common the fact that all were enthusiastic patriots who firmly believed that religion was the foundation of government and there was a firm link between religion and patriotism.²

That sixty-year period when evangelical enthusiasm spread across great mountain ranges and valleys and into the Southern states, particularly, was also a time of Westward migration and expansion. By the 1840s, for instance, settlers moved into our own territory in Northeast Tarrant County. A significant number of them came from Missouri to claim land as part of the Peters Company, or Colony, as it came to be called.

After 1865, an even greater migration of Southerners moved westward because they lost everything during the Civil War and wanted to escape political persecution from Reconstruction government. Religion was part of the "goods" brought to the frontier, some of it denominational, but some not. According to leaders in the American Home Missionary Society, a group formed in the evangelical community to reach areas of westward expansion,

converting others to Christianity was an act of saving the republic. Revivals and camp meetings during which people from long distances came together at some designated place to camp for an extended period of time—sometimes for two weeks—to hold worship services designed to bring sinners into the religious fold, although not necessarily into a designated denomination, were launched during this period and were firmly grounded in the evangelical movement.³

writing for the *Handbook of Texas*, noted that Texas, particularly, was thought to be a hotbed of sin:

The early enthusiastic Protestant camp meetings in Austin's colony, instigated predominantly by Methodists, Baptists, and Cumberland Presbyterians, were, however, in defiance of Mexican law, which called for colonizers to be loyal to the Mexican government and become Catholics. Most Texans bore

*Of course, the more appalling the reports about religious conditions in Texas, the greater the excitement of evangelical Protestants in the United States. As one scholar aptly observed, the Texas frontier offered an arena in which the godly could battle 'the Devil on his own ground.' Here was a rugged country where sinners could be snatched from Satan's grasp, a godless society redeemed and permanent institutions established to carry the struggle against evil into the future.*⁴

These camp meetings were born in Kentucky, organized by Presbyterian ministers who followed the Scottish tradition of protracted open-air religious meetings, known as “communion seasons.” The intense religious fervor was soon repudiated by the Presbyterians and the Baptists, but the Methodists launched the circuit rider on the western frontier as a preacher who traveled alone on horseback into the wilderness in order to bring religion to those living in areas where no churches were accessible. It was sometimes the circuit rider who organized camp meetings, bringing together several families from far-flung places.⁵

Camp meetings bearing various denominational labels were also part of the cultural baggage accompanying migration to Texas after having been filtered through the Southern states. John W. Storey,

*Catholicism lightly, giving not much more than lip service to the faith. Stephen F. Austin, however, was concerned that the camp meetings constituted a breach of his impresario contract. During the early 1830s, he referred to the assertive and hyper-enthusiastic Methodists as 'imprudent, fanatic, violent, and noisy' and worse trouble 'than a dozen horse thieves.' Austin thought that if the camp meetings were stopped, then Mexican officials wouldn't pay any attention to private worship services taking place in homes. As it turned out, Mexicans weren't too concerned. When one Mexican authority was told about a joint Methodist-Presbyterian meeting in 1832, his response was that 'unless the worshippers were stealing horses or killing people they were to be left alone.'*⁶



continued

Noah Smithwick, that venerable chronicler of early days in Texas, recalled one Methodist camp meeting occurring in the autumn of 1855 at Sand Springs, near Burnet, with a Parson Whipple doing the preaching. Smithwick wrote:

The hungry, both spiritually and physically, were freely fed at these meetings, the preachers dispensing the stronger spiritual meat of fire and brimstone first and tapering off the feast with milk and honey, while outside at every camp long tables were spread, provided with comfort for the physical man, where all were welcomed, an invitation to that effect being extended from the pulpit in the name of the campers whose hospitality was grossly abused in consequence. As other denominations took up the work, a regular chain of camp meetings every fall, with the incidental dispensation of free grub, induced many . . . to become regular camp followers, and most of them being quite forehanded with children, they became a heavy tax on the good brethren. The meetings, however, were not then drawn out indefinitely, five days being the usual limit.⁷

Some ten years prior to 1855, when Smithwick described the camp meetings taking place in Central Texas in the Hill Country, settlers were already moving into our territory, as previously mentioned. With them they brought their various religions and beliefs. They built churches, which were also used for schools regardless of denomination, established cemeteries, sang the songs of their faith, most of which were similar, held revivals, which were shorter, one or two day versions of camp meetings, and camp meetings, too.

The journal contains as much evidence as could be gathered about the earliest churches and congregations, religious life of the communities which was often the only place for social gatherings, cemeteries, along with photographs and even isolated tidbits and tales of congregants, circuit riders, preachers and parsons—rarely called pastors or ministers—always referred to as Brother So-and-So—and examples of music. Except for the Primitive Baptists, there is no attempt to define denominations as to origins, beliefs or differences. The histories, either written by congregants of the various denominations, local historians, or reported in newspapers, are presented without editing, and speak to the heart of various beliefs. 🦋

End Notes:

¹ “Religion and the Founding of the American Republic: VII, Religion and the New Republic, The Camp Meeting,” *Library of Congress* ONLINE: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion>. This site features drawings, illustrations, and artwork as well as text, but no page numbers.

² Ibid.; later paragraph

³ Ibid.; later paragraph

⁴ John Storey, “Religion,” *The Handbook of Texas 5* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996). (523)

⁵ “Religion and the Founding of the American Republic: VII, Religion and the New Republic, The Camp Meeting,” *Library of Congress* ONLINE: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion>.

⁶ John Storey, “Religion,” *The Handbook of Texas 5*

⁷ Noah Smithwick, “The Evolution of a State, or Recollections of Old Texas Days,” *Southwestern Classics* ONLINE, <http://www.lsjunction.com>

From the beginning

A CIRCLE OF CHURCHES

Frontier families living on acreage separated from others, sometimes by several miles, gathered according to their personal religious convictions first in their own homes, but soon they constructed buildings designated as churches, which also served as schools and community gathering places. Often those churches marked the beginnings of settlements and villages. Even today, all across the still-rural areas of Texas, small churches or cemeteries are all that remain of a once thriving community. The church house, as it was sometimes called, was no more important than the cemetery close to the building. Being able to bury their loved ones in a central location must have offered a measure of comfort to strangers in a strange land. One of the most poignant passages in the Jonathan Blevins family saga about coming to our area in 1873 is in recounting how the child of William and Louisa Tuttle Blevins died along the way and was buried beside the trail. A stranger who lived nearby shared the family's grief and comforted the parents with her promises to care for the tiny grave (Lyda White files; Blevins narrative). Similar stories appear in

almost every narrative of frontier Westering.

Of the earliest religious groups in the Westlake vicinity, several are of note because of well-documented histories. Some, however, rely on historical markers, recollections of early members, cemetery roles, newspaper articles, and the like as witness and testimony to their being.

No attempt is made to document any church history to the present, or to add other denominations which appeared later in time. Sometimes the same information varies slightly from one account to another. Of special importance is a recounting of frontier religion in our part of the Cross Timbers written by Westlake Historical Preservation Society member, David Brown, who also includes the who, why, when, how, and where the earliest settlers established themselves, thereby providing an invaluable factual history of time and place around what has become Westlake.

Church histories and cemetery records are presented in the order each appeared in the area as close as it is possible to determine. 🦋



A baptism on Bear Creek: Lyda White collection

A HISTORY OF LONESOME DOVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Founded in 1846

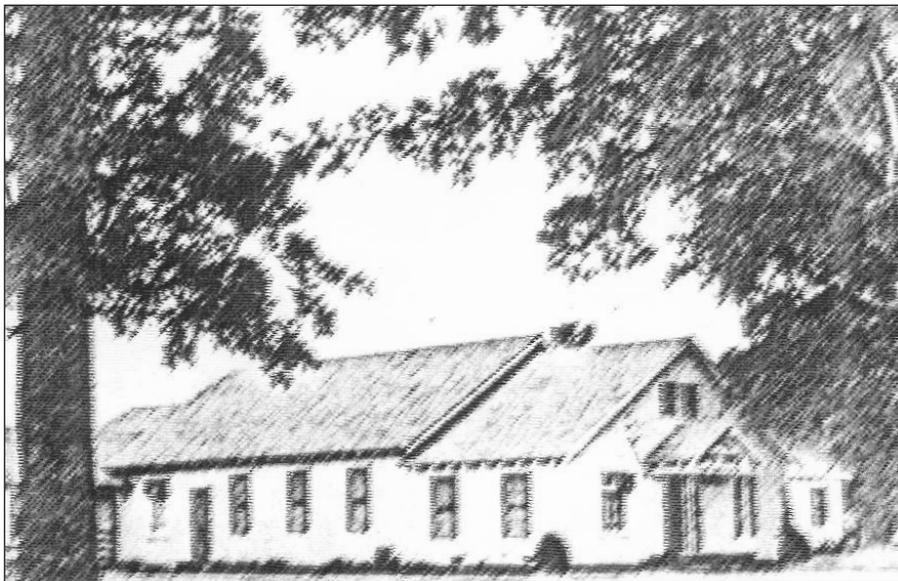
History compiled by Betty Tanner & Frances Hogue
Edited by Fran W. Hoover, June 1991. Revised February 1996.

The history of Lonesome Dove Baptist Church is a legacy passed down to us from the people who left their homeland, fought the Indians, and braved the elements to start a new life.

Praise God for the men who, while listening to the lonesome coo of a dove, stood under a tree on the third Saturday in February of 1846 and organized a place to worship in the wild and untamed part of the country called Texas.

The footprints of the early settlers and founders of the church are clearly visible in the lives of the descendants who still live in the Grapevine/Southlake area, or who still worship at Lonesome Dove.

May our present generation serve as faithfully to promote the good news that Christ died for our sins so that we might have life—and have it more abundantly.



THE LONESOME COO OF A DOVE

History peers over the shoulders of the past into the private lives of people and events, influencing who and what we are today.

We are privileged to “peer” over the shoulders of the founders and earliest members of The Lonesome Dove Baptist Church in Southlake, Texas. This knowledge of their trials and their will to overcome them, should bring each current member into a deeper appreciation and love for the church affectionately called “The Dove.”

1844: Wagon Train Left Missouri

Early in 1844, a large group of families related by blood or marriage loaded their wagons with supplies, guns, dogs, and Bibles, leaving Platte County, Missouri, heading for the little known and sparsely settled land of Texas.

On their way, the pioneers encountered swollen streams, were harassed by Indians, and were plagued with illness, which caused many to turn back before reaching the Trinity River.

The swollen banks of the Trinity stood before the travelers, preventing their crossing for three weeks. In spite of hardships, several brave families finally reached their destination—Texas. So enthralled were two men that in 1845 these two returned to Missouri to convince their relatives of the wonders of Texas.

1845: The Second Wagon Train Heads for Texas

Heeding the call of the two men, twelve additional wagons, called the Missouri Colony, left Missouri in September 1845, daring to travel in a land where few white men had ever traveled. These

were a strong and hearty people who adapted quickly to their new life as pioneers.

Widely scattered, the few settlements along the trail offered little protection to the travelers. No stranger to hardship, these skilled lumberjacks were also skilled with a musket.

While the settlements along the Trinity River were sparse, wild turkeys, buffalo, deer, and wild horses in the Cross Timbers area (now Grapevine) offered the new settlers ample food. Although panthers and wolves lurked in the thickets of bushes and trees, the settlers were more keenly aware of the small bands of Indians that might be lurking in the bush.

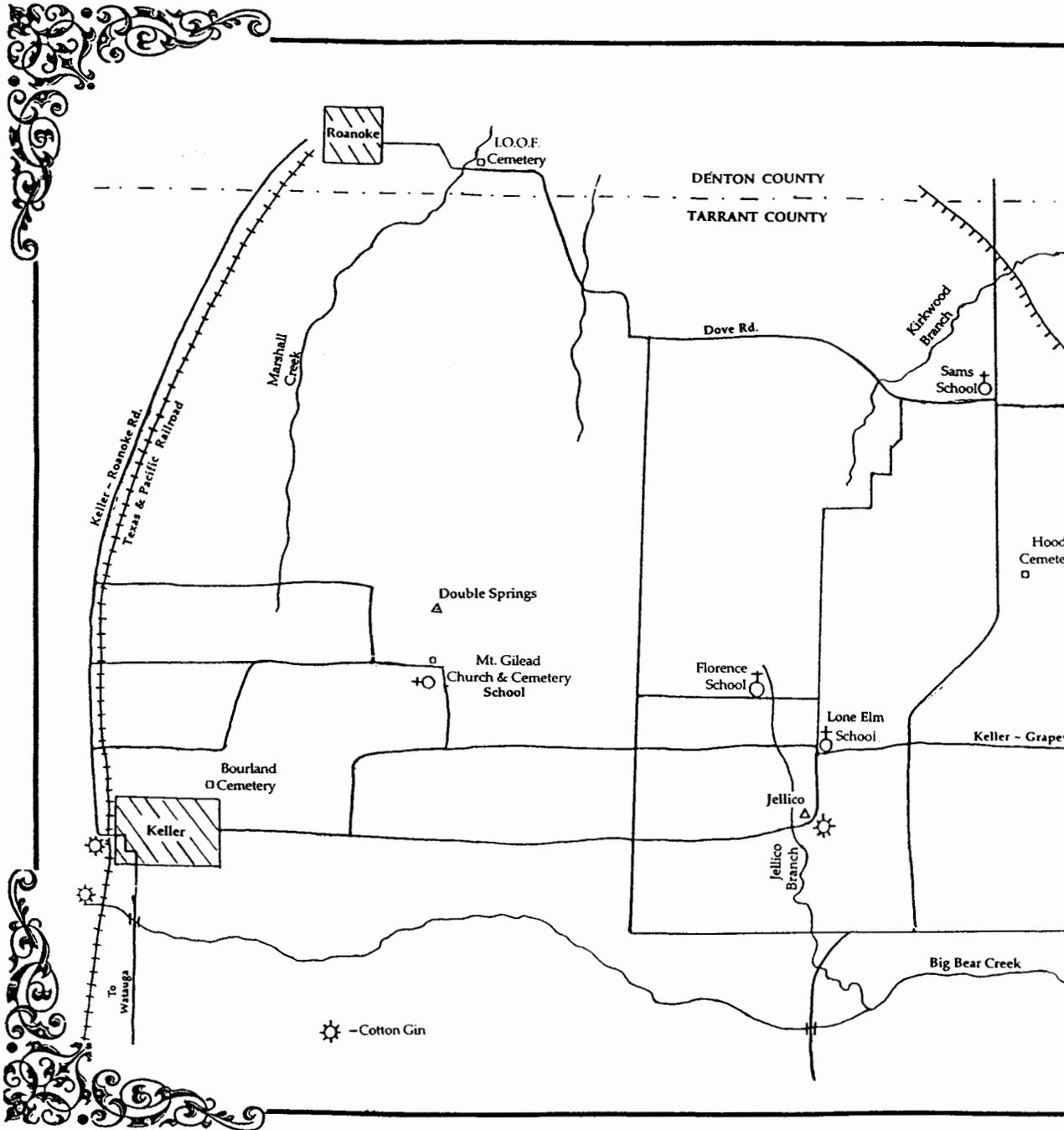
Even with the constant threat of danger, the settlers could not help but relish the lush and enchanting new land filled with wild game of all description, and with honey and wild grapes.

1845: New Texans Celebrate Their First Christmas

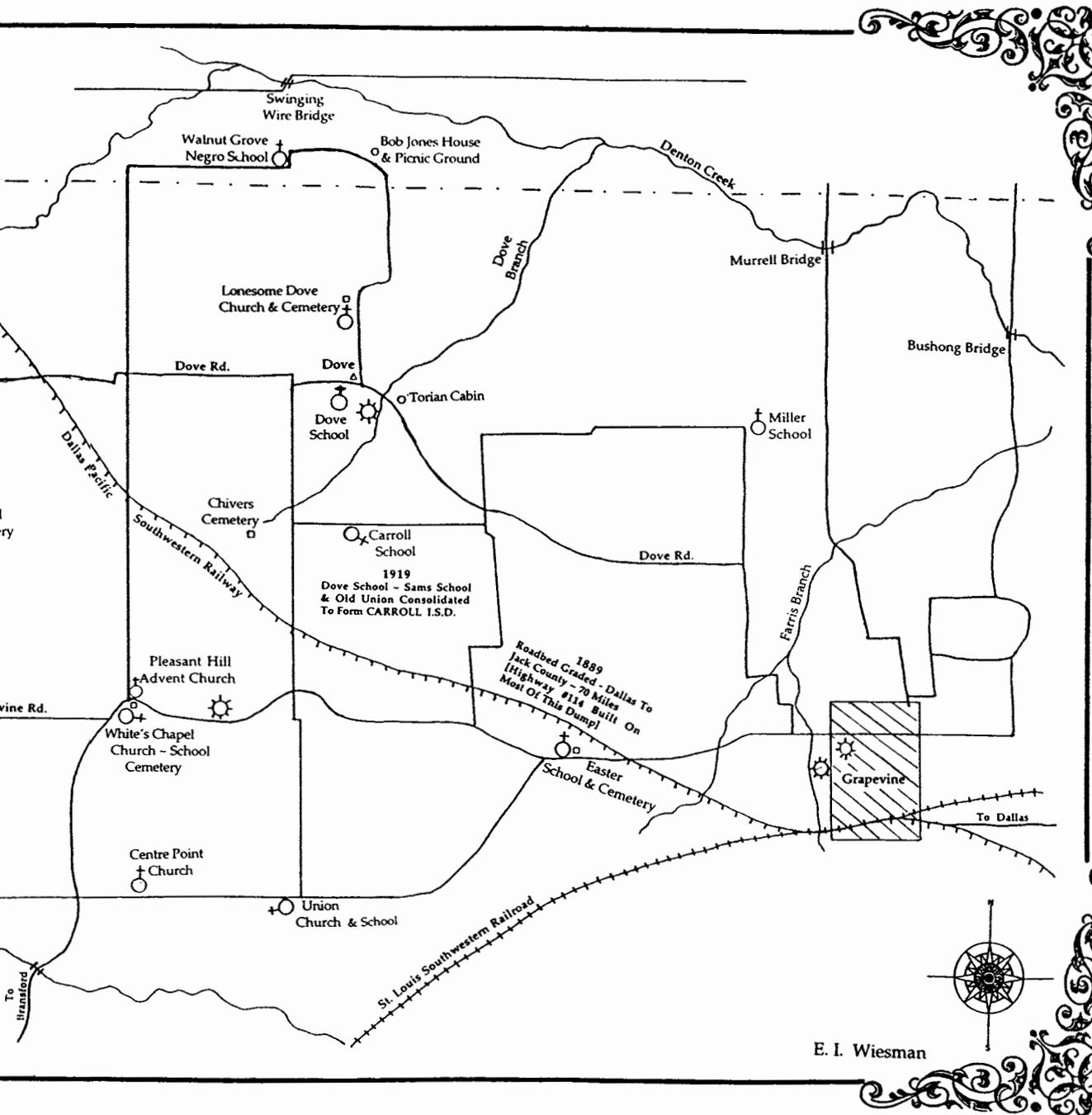
The first Christmas in their new homeland of Navarro County (now Tarrant County) was a Christmas they would always remember. It was this particular Christmas that a great snowstorm swept across Texas in December 1845 and found the new settlers unprepared for the harsh weather. So, when the weather permitted, they quickly began to build homes, all working together to build one home at a time.

Homes completed and families settled in, the settlers turned their attention to the next order of business: establishing a place of worship. Just as the first century Christians met in private homes to worship the Lord, so did these early Texans.

continued on page 10



Tarrant County ~ 1920



February 1846: Lonesome Dove Baptist Church Established

The third Saturday in February 1846 was an important day for the settlers. Twelve members officially established a church, naming it the Lonesome Dove Baptist Church. Tradition has it

that while the men were meeting to discuss forming the church and selecting its name, a dove flew into a nearby tree. As the meeting progressed, the men kept hearing the lonesome coo of a dove, which seemed to dominate the meeting.

Thus, Lonesome Dove Baptist Church was established in 1846

[near what would become the town of Grapevine].



Judge Hodges, an ordained minister, served the church as its first pastor from February 1846 to November 1846. Hall Medlin served as church clerk, and James Gibson and John Hallford served as the church's first deacons.

November 1846-1857: John A. Freeman, Pastor

In November 1846, John A. Freeman became Lonesome Dove's first permanent pastor, serving the church until 1857. The text for pastor Freeman's first sermon was taken from I Peter 3:12, *"For the eyes of the LORD are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers, but the face of the LORD is against them that do evil."*

Prior to his ordination, Pastor Freeman taught school. The house that was built in 1846 for a church also served as a school.

Church membership, which reached seventy-seven by December 1846, included two black people. Two more black slaves joined The Dove in 1847.

October 1847: New Church Site Selected

In October 1847, a new church site was selected. The church was built on the newly selected site and is where the Dove's Fellowship Hall stands today.

The church's services were held the third Saturday and Sunday of each month. On Saturday, the members would enjoy a big barbeque and have singing.

Lonesome Dove was the only church within 200 miles. To be on time for the business meeting Saturday morning, members would camp out on the church ground Friday night. Possible Indian raids prevented many from riding their horses, so they walked the fifteen miles to attend the Saturday and Sunday services.

Lonesome Dove Responsible for Many Other Churches

What a rich heritage Lonesome Dove has! Many of the early churches in Tarrant County were formed directly or indirectly from Lonesome Dove Baptist Church. In September 1855, John Freeman, as well as pastoring The Dove, also was pastoring churches in the area, of which Lonesome Dove was the Mother Church. Churches that had their origin from or were aided by include: Mount Gilead, Bear Creek, Birdville, Center Spring, Grapevine, Walnut Grove, Shiloh, Roanoke, New Harmony, Pleasant Run, Red Sulfur Spring, Sandy Grove, South Leon, and a church as far away as San Bernardino, California! Tradition has it that First Baptist of Dallas was started by The Dove,

W.H. Day, Pastor for Twenty-five Years

Time marched on and God continued to bless The Dove. Brother W.H. Day, for whom the Fellowship Hall is still named, had the distinction of serving as pastor for a total of twenty-five years, being called to pastor on three different occasions.

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Higgins joins the church

Brother Day's daughter, Lizzie Higgins, joined in 1915, and is a member in 1996. Of all her memories of Lonesome Dove, perhaps the following is her most memorable: When Lizzie was a young girl, all revivals were held in August when the moon was full so people could see to travel to the church by the "light of the moon." It seemed that it was Uncle Eddy Brown's job to inform the church when the moon would be full in August. By August, Lizzie recalled, most of the crops had been "laid by" and some of the men could attend the day services.

Descendants of Charter Member, Mrs. Suzannah Foster

The following have the distinction of being direct descendants of Mrs. Foster: Lou Etta Joyce, Diane Joyce Cato, and Brenda Joyce Stapleton are all still members of Lonesome Dove.

C.W. (Bill) Long

Mr. Bill Long, past chairman of the deacons, ordained in 1938, was a member of The Dove for about fifty years in 1988. Mr. Long's great-grandfather, Tolbert Allen Brother, a deacon, and second wife, Sarah R., a deaconess, joined the church in 1876.

Brother Edward Franklin (Uncle Eddy Brown), a grand father of Bill Long, joined the church in 1872. Uncle Eddy Brown served as clerk from 1881 to 1920. Uncle Eddy, who also served as a deacon, deserves a special place in the historical archives of the church for his long and faithful service as a member. Edward Franklin's wife, Nancy Eaves, joined the church in 1869.

Other descendants of the Brown family, who were on the church roll in 1988, are: Judson Long, Tim Long, Bobby Long, Pamela Long, Carol Long, Harriel Long, J.C. and Faye Greener, George Edward Greener, Timothy Burgess, James Stapleton.

Still active members and descendants of the Brown family are Martha Jo Burgess and her daughters, Mary Jo Wood and Sherry Foster.

The Torian family

J.W. (Bud) Tanner was ordained as a deacon by the Dove in 1938. John Torian, Bud's great grandfather, joined the Dove in 1887. The Torian family came to this area in 1876 and purchased a 360-acre tract of land east of Lonesome Dove Baptist Church. Bud and his second wife, Betty, still live on a part of the family homestead in Southlake, Texas.

The log cabin occupied by the Tanner-Torian families was moved to Liberty Park on the Main Street of Grapevine in December 1975 as a Texas Historical Landmark. A stone in the chimney was found that was dated 1869.

Bud Tanner's great-grandmother was a Sowell, whose name appeared on the first membership roll of The Dove. Perhaps the Sowell family was a part of the second wagon group of twelve wagons that came from Missouri to bring more relatives to the new country of Texas.

In 1988, Bud and Betty Tanner donated 1.61 acres of land of the original tract of the Tanner-Torian land to The Dove. In January 1991, The Unity Church purchased the 1.61 acres and the current facility for \$150,000.

Bud's brother, Howard Tanner, is still on the church membership roll.

1876: Cate Family Moved to the Area

The family of Zona Cate Long, wife of Bill Long, moved to this area in 1876. Zona's great-grandfather, Solomon Cate and grandfather, William Marion Cate, were the first Cates recorded in this area. However, Zona's father, John Daniel Cate, Sr., who joined the Dove in 1911, was the first of the Cates to be on the membership roll. John Daniel Cate was a deacon for fifty-three years.

1933: Lavenia Cate Henderson Joined The Dove

Lavenia (Vene) Cate Henderson joined the Dove in 1933. As of this writing, Vene is still an active member. Her great-grandfather, Joel Dwight, was on the church roll in 1869. Her grandfather, J.L. Dwight, was The Dove's pastor in 1908. He also filled in many times later.

The Cate side of Vene's family moved to this area in 1876, as stated in the Cate section above. Vene's sister, Dorcas, is also an active member.

Billy Cate, Vene's Brother is currently one of the Dove's deacons. Billy Cate's wife, Peggy, joined with their daughter, Cheryl, and are long standing members. Cheryl's daughters are Amanda and Tiffany, and they are also members on the church roll.

1944: Ursel English joins the Dove

Ursel English, who joined the church in 1944, was a member until her death on January 14, 1993. Martin, Ursel's father, was listed on the membership roll as a deacon but no date was given. Her great-grandmother, Keziah Williams Martin, who came to this area in 1850 and 1855 was on the membership roll of the Dove in 1869, along with her grandparents, U.P. Martin and wife, Elizabeth Martin. Keziah's father, Hardin Williams, was a Baptist preacher. Other descendents currently on the roll include Marvin Babb, and Mike Babb.

1927: Gladys Greener Joined the Dove

Gladys Greener joined the Dove in 1927 and had been a member for sixty-two years then she lettered out* on November 8, 1989 to live with her daughter in Terrell, Texas. The Chivers family first settled here around 1852. Gladys' grandmother, Sarah Chivers Williams, joined the church in 1887. The Chivers name first appeared on the roll in 1865. Herman Greener, the son of Gladys Williams Greener is a descendant on the present member-

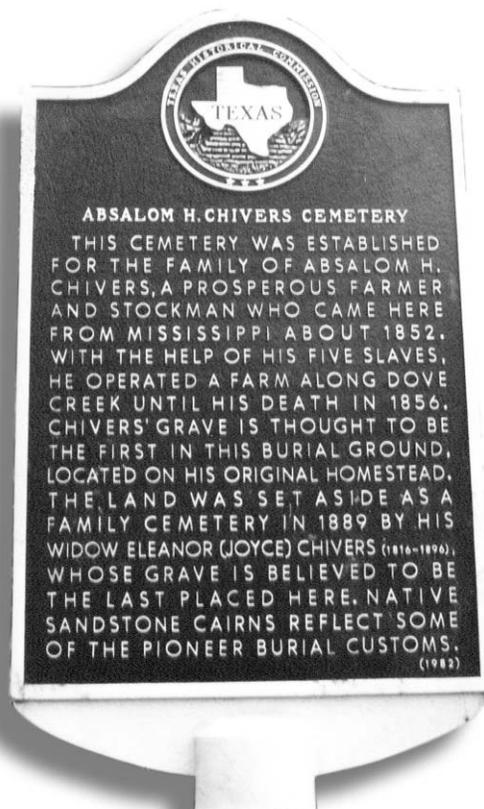
ship roll. (To letter out means to ask for a letter from the church directing another church of same denomination to admit you.)

1963: Frances Hogue Returned to Lonesome Dove

Frances Hogue returned to Lonesome Dove in 1963. She is a granddaughter of W.H. Day, who was the pastor of the church for twenty-five years. The great-grandmother of Frances was Keziah Williams Martin, who was on the membership roll in 1869.

The Martin family came to this area between 1850 and 1855 from Illinois. Frances great-grandparents, Thomas Herald Byas and wife Lucinda Martin, were on the roll of the Dove in 1869. 🌸

A special thank you to Mrs. Pearl Foster O'Donnell, for without her books, written in 1968, this history could not have been compiled.



THE CHURCH AT THE HEAD OF B'AR CREEK

A short and informal History of Mount Giliad Baptist Church

It was 1850 and God's grace shown on America.

The war with Mexico was over and most of the soldiers had returned home. Many, having seen parts of the world outside of their own home for the first time, decided to migrate west. Some headed for California where reports said there were ample fruitful land, a good climate, and gold.

Others decided to come to Texas, a land they had seen during the war that seemed green and lush. Texas had been a state in the union for only five years and still fit the description of Wildernes and Frontier.

Shortly after Texan independence was assured at San Jacinto, settlers began to stream into the northern and northeastern parts of the state, which were the most accessible and seemed to be the safest. And the settlers had come to a remote and rugged place. The nearest railroad in 1850 had its western terminus in Monroe, Louisiana. A rail line connected Galveston and Houston and had been started toward Austin, but work halted when it was less than twenty-five miles out of Houston. The most accessible means of transportation to the outside world was by wagon up the National Highway (a road established and built under the Republic of Texas), which linked Dallas with the navigable head of the Red River. From there, a steamboat ran down to Shreveport and on to New Orleans.

And there were Indians—Native Americans—who did not look with much favor on the efforts of

latter-day Americans to settle the area. At least three different tribes circulated in the area, alternately fighting each other and the settlers. These were the Caddos, the Tonkawas and the Wacos. Probably the Cheyenne, Apache and some others were known to frequently pass through the area. *[The Comanche were also in significant numbers and eventually posed the greatest threat.]* The United States Army, given the task of protecting the frontier settlers from these attacks, built Camp Worth at a ford on the Trinity River in 1849. The only other settlement in what was later Tarrant County was Grapevine Springs *[in Coppell]*. Sam Houston had negotiated a peace treaty here in 1835, a stroke of genius which kept the Indians from attacking settlers while they were fighting for their independence from Mexico. *[He later negotiated another treaty among various tribes in 1841, hoping to secure the safety of the region for permanent settlers to come. The Comanches, however, refused to come.]*

An enterprising man named Peters secured a land grant in the area, then sold parts of it to would-be settlers who came to Texas to be part of the Peters Colony. This was in 1844 or 1845 before Texas entered the Union. All of the founding members of Mount Gilead church apparently came to Texas to be part of this Colony.

[In 1846, near what would become Grapevine], a small Baptist house of worship, Lonesome Dove Church, was formed. It is described as being originally located within a quarter mile of Grapevine,

although it is now in Southlake. All of this area, all of Tarrant County, and beyond, was then part of Fannin County, with the county seat at Bonham, in far northeast Texas. As more settlers moved in it became obvious that a new county—in fact several new counties—were needed to bring local government closer to the population. Accordingly, Tarrant County—along with Denton county and some others—was created by the Texas legislature on December 20th, 1849 and organized the following August 5, with Birdville as the original county seat.

Travel—even for short distances—was difficult at best in those days and many of the Baptists in the area who were nominally members of the Lonesome Dove Church, found it difficult or impossible to regularly attend services. So, Reverend John Allen Freeman, a member of the Lonesome Dove Church, established three other meeting places—missions we would call them today—and held monthly services at each.

These founding members were an interesting lot and at least five of them are buried in nearby Mount Gilead Cemetery.

Reverend Freeman described these sites as being “one on Bear Creek, one in the neighborhood of Brother Barecroft, and north in the settlement where James and J.H. Halford lived.” Those who made decisions for Christ at these were accepted into the Lonesome Dove Church.

As the need increased for churches closer to the farms where people lived, a number of the members of Lonesome Dove church were given their release from membership and instructed to form a new church “on the hed of Bar Creek” This event happened on the third Saturday in June, 1850, and the following month on July 13, 1850, Mount Gilead Baptist Church was organized at the home of Daniel Barcroft. (In subsequent years the

name, Barcroft, or Barecroft was misspelled as Bancroft and the street by the side of the present church is still called Bancroft Road.)

Reverend Freeman, Reverend David Myers, and Jehu V. Fyke were the organizing members and there were ten others who were members of the church from its founding. These were Reverend Myer’s wife, Lutetia, Reverend Freeman’s wife, Nancy, Daniel and Mary Ann Barcroft, Iraneous and Lucinda Neace, Permelia Allen, Abby (or Abbie) Dunham and two slaves, Ambrose and Carolyn Collard, who had been inherited by Permelia Allen when her husband died before she came to Texas. Although many records list only eight charter members, omitting the Myers family, Nancy Freeman, Mary Ann Barcroft, and Fyke, all of these were associated with the church since its inception.

Reverend Freeman was born in 1821 in



Graves at Mt. Giliad Cemetery

South Carolina, and later lived in Tennessee and Missouri, where the Hopewell Baptist Church of Harrisonville licensed him to preach in 1843, Missouri. He was ordained a minister in July 1846, at the Lonesome Dove Baptist Church, of which he and his wife, Nancy Freeman, also were charter members. He lived until 1919 and died in Los Angeles, California.

Reverend Myers was born in Kentucky in 1797 and was ordained a minister in Illinois before coming to Texas in 1845 with his wife, Lutetia, and their fourteen children. He helped organize the Union Baptist Church, the first Baptist Church in Dallas County, and, in 1849, helped to form the Elm Fork Baptist Association. Apparently, he did not stay long at Mount Gilead as records show that he pastored at other churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. He died in 1843 in Dallas County.

Jehu Fyke was a member of the Lonesome Dove Baptist Church before coming to Mount Gilead. He later lived in Gainesville and other towns in north Texas. It is not known when or where he died.

Daniel Barcroft was born in Tennessee in 1812 and became a Christian in 1831. He married Mary Ann Allen sometime before 1840 and they

came with her family to Texas in 1847. He was a deacon at the Lonesome Dove Baptist Church before helping found Mount Gilead. He was elected Tarrant County Commissioner when the county was in 1850 and later served in the Confederate army. After the Civil War, he returned to Mount Gilead and died in the area in 1881. He is believed to be buried in the Mount Gilead Cemetery, but his exact gravesite is unknown. His wife, who died several years before he did, is buried at Mount Gilead.

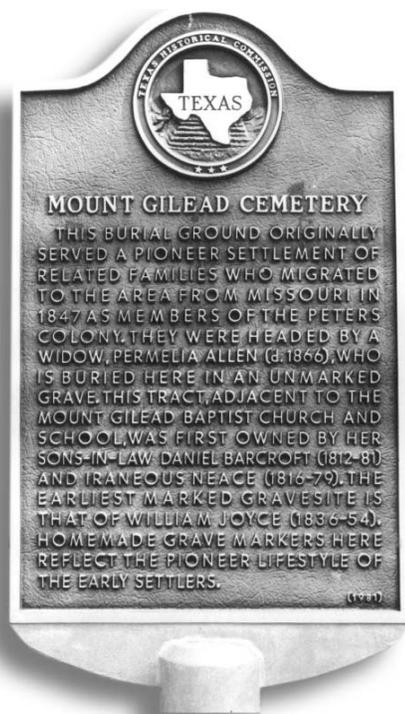
Abby V. Allen Dunham was born in 1808 in North Carolina and came to Texas with her mother in 1847. She was a widow with several children. Nothing is known of her later life.

Ira Neace was born in 1816 in Tennessee and married Lucinda Allen, also of Tennessee, in 1836 while both were living in Missouri. He came to Texas with his family in 1847 and patented (claimed) the section of land just east of Mount Gilead and the cemetery. The survey of this area still bears his name. In the mid-1850s he moved to a plot about six miles west of the Mount Gilead church, but continued to attend services here. He served in the Confederate Army and returned to the area after the war. He died in 1879 and his wife in 1874 and both are buried in Mount Gilead cemetery.

Permilia "Milly" Allen was born about 1772 in North Carolina, and, as a child witnessed actions in the American Revolution. She married Thomas Allen in North Carolina and the couple later lived in Tennessee and Missouri. Her husband died in Missouri in 1845 or 1846, and she came to Texas in 1847 with a group of friends and relatives. She joined the Lonesome Dove Church in October 1848.

Milly Allen was the mother of Lucinda Neace, Mary Ann Barcroft and Abby Dunham. She died in 1866 and is buried in the Mount Gilead Cemetery.

Ambrose and Carolyn Collard were slaves



inherited by Milly Allen on the death of her husband in Missouri . They apparently stayed with her after they were emancipated at the end of the Civil War, at least until her death in 1866. After that, records are scant, although Carolyn Collard is believed to have died in Cook County sometime before 1898.

The new church needed a home, and, for the first few months, none was available. Members met for services at the homes of members, mostly at the farm of Daniel Barcroft. In 1850, or early 1851, the church began to hold services in a small log cabin near Barcroft's home. There is discrepancy about when and for what purpose this building was built. Some indicated that it had been built in 1849 as a school building. Others say it was built in 1851 by the church members as their meeting place and later used as a school. In either case, it was extremely primitive, having puncheon (split log) flooring and log slab seats. It was located about where the present Youth Building is situated and was large enough to accommodate the church's rapid growth in the first few years.

From the original group of founders, Mount Gilead grew rapidly under the leadership of Reverend Freeman and Daniel Barcroft, who was the earliest known deacon. A few months after its founding, Mount Gilead church was accepted as a member church of the Elm Fork Association of United Baptists. The Elm Fork name indicates that most of the member churches of the Association lay north and east of Mount Gilead, as this is the area drained by the Elm Fork of the Trinity River. The United Baptists were, and are, a distinct branch of Baptists and they never joined the then five-year-old Southern Baptist Convention.

Mount Gilead was active in the Elm Fork Association, and, in October 1853, was host to the annual meeting of the group.

There was some dissention in the following years because the Elm Fork group also accepted

as members those who were from other denominations. Whether because of this, or more likely because of the westward movement of the population, four churches—Mount Gilead, Lonesome Dove, Bear Creek and Birdville—asked for and received letters of dismissal from the Elm Fork Association. In September 1855, they and other churches formed the West Fork Association of United Baptists. The preliminary organizational meeting of this Association was held at Mount Gilead church a few weeks later, and the Association was formally organized at Birdville in October 1855. A total of twelve churches were listed as charter members of the new group. Mount Gilead, which by this time boasted eighty-six members, was one of the larger member churches.

A Mount Gilead member, identified only as H. Grandbury, was named to the constitutional committee of the new group, was elected treasurer of the Association, and was a member of the Domestic Missions Board. In 1856, Reverend Freeman was elected moderator of the Association.

Among Reverend Freeman's activities was a ministry among the soldiers at Camp Worth, later Fort Worth, and he preached the first sermon ever delivered in Fort Worth.

By 1857, Mount Gilead had grown to seventy-five members. In April of that year, Reverend Freeman resigned as pastor of the church, and with several other families, left for California on an ox-powered wagon. He apparently did not return to the area until fifty years later when he preached his last sermon in 1907 at the sixtieth anniversary services of the Lonesome Dove Church.

Reverend Freeman was succeeded by Reverend J.T. Willis, about whom little is known, and he was succeeded in 1858 by Reverend Mug, who also is largely unknown. He is not mentioned in any other records and apparently was pastor for only a few months. Reverend Mug was succeeded in 1858 by Reverend A. Dobkins, who was pastor

during the great tragedy of 1859.

In 1859 an Indian raiding party burned the original church building to the ground—or did they? Indians were certainly active in the area in the 1850s. In fact, the last Indian raid recorded was in the mid-1870s. Thomas Neace, a nephew of Iraneous Neace, who came to the area in 1847, later wrote about Tonkawa Indians coming up upon the playground while he was at school (presumably at the Mount Gilead Church site). His sister, Muhulda Neace Hill, later wrote that on moonlit nights she could watch the Indian raiding parties from the window of her home. If the barn was not kept locked, they would take the livestock. In fact, her father sometimes chained and padlocked his horse to a tree to keep it from being stolen.

There is a long established tradition in the church that the original building was burned by the Indians in 1859—but nobody who was there in 1859 is known to have written about the event. Thomas Neace, who wrote extensively of his life in the area at the time, never mentioned it, although he told many stories about Indian raids and visits. His cousin, Thomas R. Allen, who also lived in the area, and wrote about Indian actions there, also omitted any mention of the burning of the church.

There are authoritative accounts written later about the burning of the original building and it is certain that there was a great deal of raiding and other hostile activity by the Indians at the time. Also, it is probable that the original building was not there in 1862, because a new building was reported to have been built on that same site in that same year.

The Indian raid and church burning have given to Mount Gilead a much storied past. But there appears to be no way to prove that the Indians did it. Still, the fear of Indian raids persisted and the tales of members carrying guns to church is probably true. However there is no indication of further Indian action against the church itself.

Reverend Dopkins resigned in 1860, and the Mount Gilead Church entered into a period of decline. A new church building is reported in some accounts to have been built in 1862 and to have been the first in the area to have glass windows. Other accounts however, indicate that no new building was built until after the Civil War. The outbreak of the war in early 1861, began a period in which church membership dropped sharply. All early records were destroyed in a fire in the 1870s, but it appears that actual membership dropped below twenty and services were held only intermittently in the latter years of the war. The new meeting house of 1862, if it ever existed, had either been pulled down or had fallen into disrepair, because church members wrote of not being able to get a pastor to come without having a place of worship. The church was apparently without a pastor from 1861 to 1866.

However, all was not despair. Daniel Barcroft returned from the war, apparently before hostilities actually ended and was unwilling to see the Mount Gilead church die. Under his leadership, a new church building was planned and membership in the church began again to increase. In 1865 Mount Gilead reported more than twenty baptisms, the largest number reported to the West Fork Association by any church in membership.

Reverend A.J. Halford was called as pastor in 1866, the first of his four tenures as pastor, lasting until 1888. His first tenure as pastor however lasted only until 1867. He was succeeded by Reverend W.W. Mitchell, a Baptist minister from Missouri who apparently had been forced to leave that state after preaching against the actions of the Union Army in the area. Mitchell resigned a year later in 1868, because of “the lack of a sufficient house.” Mitchell’s departure apparently was the spark needed to ignite the church into action. In May 1868, Eli A. Hall deeded one acre of the Daniel Barcroft survey to Daniel Barcroft and

Ira Neace, as “Trustees of the Baptist Church at Mount Gilead.” This land comprises about the northern one quarter of the present church land. Work began on a new building and by September of that year it was completed and able to host the thirteenth annual meeting of the West Fork Association. The building stood approximately where the red brick Youth Building stands today. This is also the approximate site of the 1849/50-log building.

After Mitchell resigned, Reverend Halford was called back for the second of his four tenures, with this one lasting until 1870. He was succeeded in 1871 by Reverend Jack D. Doyle, who was mentioned only in a report to the West Fork Association records. There are few mentions of pastors in this period because all, or most, of the church’s early records were destroyed in two fires. One, which destroyed the home of Eli A. Hill, the man who gave the original acre for the church, destroyed all of the early church records, and another, which destroyed the Tarrant County Court House, caused most or all of the original land records to be lost.

Still, Mount Gilead prospered. In 1872, the church reported to the West Fork Association that it had baptized thirty-five new Christians during the year.

Doyle resigned as pastor at the end of 1874 and was succeeded by Reverend J.O. Burnett, who remained through 1878. Again, there are no records remaining of his tenure. But the Mount Gilead church is recorded to have grown to 200 members by the end of that year. Burnett was followed by Reverend Halford who returned for his third tenure as pastor, this time for two years, 1879 and 1880.

About this time, strife and discord entered

Mount Gilead church. There are no records of what caused this discord, but some members left the church to attend elsewhere and the remaining members decided to relocate the church to a site at the present-day intersection of Elaine Drive and Bear Creek Drive along Big Bear Creek in Keller. The church members also sold the 1867 building, although not, apparently, the land on which it was located. The building was sold to a John Ladd, who is recorded to have moved the building away—to what use or fate is not now known.

At the new site, the church constructed a building, which was used as a school during the week and church on weekends. The public school system in Texas was not established until the late 1880s, and until then, all or most schools were private ventures supported by churches or private associations. Just what sort of school met in the new building is not known, but in all probability, it was one in which all classes met together with one or two teachers.

Within two years of leaving the original site, however, the membership—or most of it—agreed to return to the original site and build a new build-

ing. This included at least some of those who left the church during the “discord” and most of the church after its relocation. These two years, 1880 to 1882, were the only times since its founding in 1850 that Mount Gilead Baptist church met anywhere other than the present church site, except for the first few months when it met in various members’ homes.

The new 1882 church building again was on the site of the 1849/50, 1862 (if it actually existed),

and 1858 buildings, but it was larger than any of them. It originally was a frame building and was apparently remodeled, added to or changed several times. This building is today renovated, remodeled, and added to, the present Youth Building. For more than eighty years it was the sole structure housing Mount Gilead church. The original frame building had its walls bricked over in the 1950s.



There were about twenty members of Mount Gilead Church for whom the return to the present site was not acceptable. They lived closer to the Bear Creek site and wanted a church in that area. The railroad had come through the area in 1881 and passed close to the Bear Creek site and it seemed to promise growth to the area. So these members asked for and were given letters of dismissal, which allowed them to form a new Baptist church in the area. This was the origin of Keller Baptist Church, now known as First Baptist Church of Keller. Both at this time and later, members of Mount Gilead moved on and formed churches in Henrietta Creek and Roanoke in Texas, and at Martha in Oklahoma. All of these churches came directly from the Mount Gilead church, just as it had come from the Lonesome Dove Church.

Halford was succeeded as pastor by Reverend A.T. Thompson and it was under his leadership

that the new church building was constructed in 1882. Thompson left at the end of 1882, and was succeeded by Reverend Halford, who returned for his fourth tenure as pastor at Mount Gilead Church. He remained as pastor from 1883 to 1888, making a total of eight years as pastor over a twenty-two year period. During his last pastorate period, the old West Fork Baptist Association was disbanded and replaced by several smaller regional associations. One of these was the present Tarrant Baptist Association, of which Mount Gilead was and is a charter member. Sometime during this period, Mount Gilead became affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, although there appear to be no records of the exact date.

Keeping pastors proved a continuous problem for the church. After Halford left in 1888, Mount Gilead was served by Reverend R.K. Grimes in 1890 (apparently there was no pastor in 1889—none at least is listed on any record). Although Grimes was pastor for only about a year, he remained in the area and is buried at Mount Gilead Cemetery. Some of his descendants still live in Tarrant County. William Simms was pastor from 1891 through 1893, and was followed by Reverend S.F. Murphy from 1894 through 1896, and Reverend W.H. Woods in 1897. At this time, all of the church's pastors from John Allen on had been unsalaried. They had subsisted on gifts or donations from individual members—often in the form of fruit, vegetables, fowl, game, or other agricultural products, used clothing, and free accommodations at the homes of various members—plus what they might earn at sideline jobs.

When O.F. Gregg became pastor in 1898, it was apparent to the membership that they would have each pastor for only a short time, as they were not salaried. So, in 1899, the church budget, for the first time, included a \$200 salary for the pastor. This was a considerable sum of money for the time. Many people scraped by on less, and even

well-off people seldom earned more than a few thousand dollars in a year.

Even so, pastors came and went with distressing frequency. Gregg remained through 1901 and was succeeded by Brother Conway in 1920. Nothing appears about him in the church records and he was succeeded in 1903 by Reverend W.B. Baldwin under whose leadership Mount Gilead changed considerably.

Women appeared for the first time in the church's leadership, and the first Training Union was established. In 1906, Mrs. Ellen Elston became the first woman to be church clerk, and the next year, she was the first woman to serve as a messenger (delegate) to the Tarrant Baptist Association's annual meeting. In 1908, Mrs. Elston was named acting director of the church's first Training Union, and within a year, the Training Union had forty-six members.

When Reverend J.R. Touchstone was called to succeed Baldwin after he resigned in late 1908, the church appeared to be in good health and active. However hard times were just ahead. Touchstone himself was an active pastor and took part in the Tarrant Association activities as well. He had pastored churches in Kennedale and Mansfield, in southern Tarrant County, before coming to Mount Gilead.

Also before coming to Mount Gilead, he served on the missionary Board of the Tarrant Association and from 1907 to 1910 he was Corresponding Secretary of Missions for the Association. When he resigned as pastor in 1911, the church had ninety-four members. This was not the greatest membership Mount Gilead had had up to that time, but it was one of the highest. And it was the highest it was to have for many years.

After Touchstone left in 1911, the church had no pastor for three years, until W.W. Simms was called in 1914. He served for only a year, and was succeeded by Reverend A.J. Goodfellow, who

also stayed for only a year.

After he left in 1916, there was no pastor for some thirteen years. No one today knows what happened in 1911 to turn what had been a thriving church into only a ghost of a church. Perhaps only the records are lost, but this does not answer the whole question. After 1911, Mount Gilead made no contributions and no reports to the Tarrant Baptist Association, something it had never missed doing before. After Goodfellow left in 1916, it is alleged that the church went out of existence and only the building was left, unattended.

But this is also not possible. We have photos of events at the church during and after World War I, but have no way of knowing what was going on. Informal Meetings? Homecomings? Work days? We shall probably never know. However, there are fragmentary records that indicate that some activity connected with worship at Mount Gilead continued at least through 1928, and that some work was done to the building during this period. For part of this time, the building was used as a school. From 1928 to 1930—two years—there is absolutely no record of any activity at the church or by any of its members or former members.

However, on Easter Sunday, 1930, the church grounds were the site of an Easter egg hunt, and some of the former members decided to re-organize the church's Sunday school for the benefit of the children, if no one else. Exactly how far this effort went is uncertain, but in 1931, the condition of the church, and possibly the effort to reorganize the Sunday School, came to the attention of Reverend E.D. Reece. He was employed by the Tarrant County Baptist Association as a "county missionary" and charged with helping churches that were "making little progress."

Reece found an old roster of the members of Mount Gilead, contacted as many of them as he could, and invited them to a meeting to consider re-organizing the church. About twenty-four old-

timers attended, and these once-and-future members responded by renovating and repainting the old building, and began again holding services there. Reverend Ira Bentley was called as pastor and served through 1932. Reverend S.R. Garrison was called to succeed Bentley in 1933, and in 1934, a two-week long Revival was held to celebrate the restoration of Mount Gilead Baptist Church to active service of the Lord. Membership climbed from twenty-four at the restoration in 1932, to sixty-four in 1934, and seventy-five in 1935.

A succession of pastors followed, most serving for only one or two years, but the church grew steadily, despite the difficult financial times in the Great Depression. Reverend L.A. Moon followed Garrison and served through 1935. In 1936, when the membership had reached eighty, Reverend Paul Clifton was called. Under his leadership, the Training Union was reorganized before he resigned at the end of 1937. He was succeeded by Reverend L.E. Miller in 1938 and Reverend O.J. Cox, who served from 1939 through 1941.

During Cox's tenure, Mount Gilead Church faced the third major war to come in the church's existence. There were nearly 100 names on the church's membership roll when the Second World War began. Many moved away to jobs in defense factories, and many were called into the service. Reverend K.B. Echols was called to the church in 1942, but when he left, no pastor could be located and the church remained pastorless for about a year. Reverend B.R. Rhodes was called in 1944 and served until the end of the war in 1945.

Postwar growth of the church began in 1945 when Reverend W.A. Lawson was called, and he remained at Mount Gilead through 1949. Church membership grew to 137 by 1946 and continued to increase. Reverend Yandall Woodfin became pastor in 1950—the year that Mount Gilead celebrated its centennial—and the old church build-

ing was again renovated. Dual front doors were replaced by the single door and vestibule still there. A new roof was added and the walls covered with asbestos siding.

In 1951, Reverend Tom Lawler, a student at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was called to be pastor of Mount Gilead. He was involved in a radio ministry and through it, he preached to many thousands. Church membership at this time, 1951, reached 185, continuing the strong growth that began immediately after the war. It was during this period that the church was first air-conditioned, and the old, hewn log pews, probably dating back to the 1860s, replaced with more comfortable seating.

During this time a move was made to designate the 1882 building as a state historical site, along with Mount Gilead Cemetery across the road. The cemetery had been allowed to fall into disrepair and neglect, partly because no one was sure who held title to it. After much research by the Mount Gilead Cemetery Association, and the Tarrant County Historical Commission, an old deed was discovered with vested title to the cemetery in “the deacons of Mount Gilead Baptist Church.” Under church sponsorship, the cemetery was cleaned up, and repairs to some graves were made. Some of the oldest of graves are of stone construction and are partly above the ground. In 1982, both the cemetery and the 1882 building were designated as historical sites and marked with plaques to attest to this designation.

David Brown
1996

WHITE'S CHAPEL HISTORY

1871-1998: In Appreciation

The people of White's Chapel express their thanks and appreciation to the following people for the 125th Anniversary Historical Perspective: Doris Hall, Beatrice Cash, Mrs. Albert Austin, Estille Austin, Ray Austin, L.T. Cathcart, Sarah Reynolds, Jim Garner, Josh Weiser, and many others who contributed information and suggestion.

September 1996

In the year of 1871, twelve families and several single persons, in the town of Rising Fawn, Dade County, Georgia, decided to head west to seek their fortune. They loaded their belongings and themselves into forty different vehicles, buggies, wagons, and ox carts, pulled by mules, oxen, and horses. After a difficult trip that lasted a little over three months, they decided to settle in what was then the Great Prairie of Texas. *[Also called Grand Prairie]*

The leader of this caravan was S.B. Austin. He and his family settled on what is known as the Obediah Knight Survey. He organized a church which met in his home. He donated two acres of property north of his home for a church building. A log building was erected and the first service was held in it in February of 1872. The church was named Oak Hill, Methodist Church South. They took the name Oak Hill for the home church they left behind in Georgia. It has been reported that they had forty charter members when the church was organized; most of the families were either Austins or Blevins.

Traveling preachers filled the pulpit. It was the first Methodist Church in Tarrant County and drew members from twenty miles around. One preacher, who was called Parson White, began to fill the pulpit more often than any other and people began to call the Church White's Chapel and the name stuck. Some of the names among the early members that we recognize are Mills,

Howard, Blevins, Hogue, French, and Lowe.

There have been four buildings on the property, two of them being log buildings. One log building was torn down and the other burned. The third building, a frame structure, was damaged by a storm in 1923 and had to be torn down. The women and children of the church pulled nails and saved all the material they could. The men rebuilt the building and it forms the Fellowship Hall of the present building.

The first three buildings were used as the community school. It was a two-teacher school. Some of the people who were taught there were Clint Austin, Frank Stripling, B.F. Griffin, Mattie Glover, Izora Lightfoot, Mrs. Keller, Mrs. Nance, Alice McKiben and Alice Sawyers.

In 1916, a two-room school building was built on the church property. It was moved in 1919 to the current location of Carroll Elementary School. The former building was used as a teacher-age, but has been moved off the school property and made into a modern dwelling.

We have a church roll dating back to 1901. It is interesting to note that the Bishop in 1901 was W.A. Candler, the President Elder was B.R. Bolton, and Pastor was Y.D. Young. In this part of the history we see many names we still recognize. Among them several families of Austins, Mills, Howards, Greens, and Hagues. One entry in the old roll is the baptism of Burl Austin, who is the

oldest son of our oldest living member, Mrs. Jennie Austin, who is the widow of Albert Austin who was a grandson of the founder of the church. Burl Austin was baptized April 18, 1909. There is still a host of descendants of the Austins and Blevins families living around this part of Tarrant County.

The church was the center of community activity, and any time need arose in the community the church bell rang to summon the people. This was done if a grave needed digging or someone had been burned out and needed help. Everyone that could hear the bell knew that there was a special need and they began to meet at the church to help their fellowman. White's Chapel has been part of several different circuits over the years.

During the year 1917, Mr. L.T. Cathcart moved his family into this community. The preacher at that time was O.C. Swinney. He preached two Sundays a month at Grapevine, and one Sunday a month at White's chapel and Minter's Chapel. The tabernacle was built during this time.

In 1918 and 1919, Grapevine became a fulltime church but the pastor, C. Q. Smith, still preached at White's Chapel on Sunday afternoon. Sunday School was always held on Sunday mornings. The officers were the Sunday School Superintendent and three teachers, with an adult class, youth class, and children's class.

In 1922, C.W Irving was pastor at Grapevine and preached on Sunday afternoon at White's Chapel. It was at one of these Sunday afternoon meetings that L.T. Cathcart joined the church. Mrs. Cathcart had joined back in 1917 by letter from a church in Ft. Worth. It was also in 1922 that Mr. Ed Newton moved his family here from Keller, Texas. He and his family were faithful workers in the church. Mr. Newton led the singing, which certainly helped to hold the church together.

In 1923, White's Chapel became part of what is known as Arlington Circuit along with Thomas Chapel. The Reverend C.E. Statham was the first

pastor. He was retired at the time and lived in Arlington. He didn't have any transportation, so some of the church members would go to Arlington on Saturday and get him, and then bring him back on Monday. It was during this time that the building was damaged by a storm. The Tabernacle was boxed in and used for services. Money was raised for a new building by having pie suppers and box suppers. When the new building was finished, a used piano was brought from Ft. Worth and played by Lois Newton and Sarah Hardin.

In 1924, White's Chapel and Smithfield became a circuit. The Reverend C.E. Bludworth was the first pastor and the first of a long line of single young men to fill the pulpit. The new building was completed and payed for. Reverend Bludworth preached Saturday night and Sunday. The new building was lighted with gasoline lanterns. Mr. Newton made a special effort towards a children's choir at this time, and the children all sat at the front seat in order to help with the singing. During the time Reverend Bludworth was here, he organized the first Epworth League, with a membership of between thirty and forty young people.

In 1925 Reverend J.E. English was sent to serve the Smithfield and White's Chapel charge. In 1926 White's Chapel became part of the newly formed Keller, Colleyville, and White's Chapel charge. The first pastor was Reverend Floyd W. Thrash. Most of his pay came from the farmers tithing their produce and the preacher selling it for whatever he could get. It was during this ministry that Beatrice Cathcart joined the church. In 1929 White's Chapel became part of the Grapevine charge again with services held on Sunday afternoon. Reverend T. Pat Leach was the pastor.

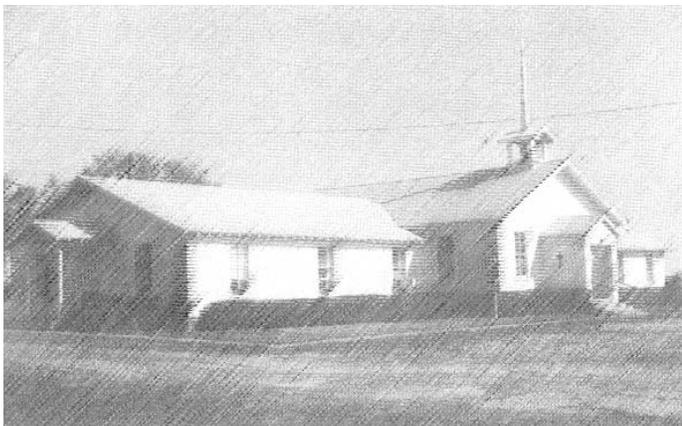
In 1930 Reverend Earl T. Wright became pastor here. He came from another conference, bringing with him his wife and his wife's parents who were from England. He held the first Easter Sunrise Service here. He also had a car. He later

became the first pastor of Castleberry Methodist Church in Fort Worth.

Some other pastors serving during the 1930s were C.A Norcroes, Murry Cox, R.W. Call, G.C. Davis and Herman Millican. During this time, White's Chapel was part of the Euless charge with the pastor living in Euless. In 1934, Reverend Floyd W. Thrash returned to White's Chapel. He is the only pastor in our history to have returned after holding pastorates in several other churches. It was during this time that Beatrice Cathcart became the bride of Virgil Cash of Fort Worth.

In 1939, White's Chapel became part of a four-point circuit with Colleyville, Oak Grove and Minter's Chapel. The Reverend Hubert H. Barnett was the first pastor. In 1943, Reverend A.B. Armstrong was sent to serve the four-point charge, and it was during his stay that a parsonage was built by all four churches. The parsonage was built on the Colleyville church property. Reverend Armstrong did much of the building and they helped to furnish the parsonage.

Other preachers serving the four point charge were Irving Gathing in 1946, George Mathews and Paul Robins in 1947, Don Roberts in 1948, and Ray Dormment in 1949. Reverend Robins was married to one of White Chapel's members, Miss Margaret Depew, daughter of Mr. And Mrs. Eli Depew. He later became a chaplain in the United States Air Force.



In 1949, Reverend Dwight Kintner came as pastor and stayed until June of 1950; then he and his wife left for the mission field in India. In was during his ministry that C.C. Halls moved into the community. Mrs. Hall and Crawford C. Jr. joined White's Chapel.

At about this time, the four-points charge split. Colleyville and Oak Grove became one circuit and White's Chapel and Minter's Chapel became another one. With the money paid to White's Chapel for its part of the parsonage, the church building was remodeled.

In 1951, Paul Wiseman went to serve the new two-point circuit. He married while he was here. Maurice Gordon, and ex-Navy commander, and a businessman in Independence, Missouri, was sent to us in 1952. He brought with him his wife, Vera, and adopted twin daughters, Patricia and Pamella. During his ministry here, he baptized Dave Roberts, Crawford Hall, Sr., Jill Hall, and Jimmy Hall. He took all of them and Letha Roberts into membership. By 1971, he had become head of the Methodist Foundation of the State of Kansas.

Along this time a grass fire got out of hand at the Will Austin place, and came across and burned the Tabernacle. It was still being used for summer revivals. It was an old landmark for the community.

You may have noticed by now that our church was being serviced by student pastors. We would like to thank God for the student pastors who came to us full of ambition and energy to use in God's Kingdom.

Jimmy Ray Scott was sent to us in 1953. Jimmy had been an executive for Gulf Oil Company. He and his wife Shirley were here for three years, and it was while he was here that we built the south wing onto the church building. He was the last pastor to serve the two-point charge of White's Chapel and Minter's Chapel.

The Reverend Ed P. Sanders was the first pastor to have just White's Chapel. He was a student

who stayed for three years from 1956-1959, and came back later, and took one of our members away as his wife. He and Jill Hall were married in White's Chapel Church on August 4, 1963. He later occupied Dean Irlan's Chair at Oxford University in Oxford, England. The Reverend Floyd Jennings served the church for one year. It was while he was here that the communion table and the pulpits were given to the church in memory of Howard Gilbert.

Reverend Sam Day, his wife, Barbara, and two sons came to us from Wyoming. While they were here they had a daughter born to them. After he finished at Perkins they returned to Wyoming and later moved to Colorado. Wesley A. Howard and his wife, Mary came to us in 1965. It was at this time we had the north wing built onto the church building, and we also had the parsonage built next to the church building. While the Howards were here, their oldest son was born.

Frank Proctor was here for a short time during 1968. While he was here the sanctuary was air-conditioned and the MYF put down red carpet. Gene Tyson came to us in the fall of 1968. He became the first full-time minister for White's Chapel. The membership grew under his guidance and the church purchased four acres south of the present building. We were looking forward to big growth in the near future.

White's Chapel celebrated its centennial in May 1971, under the leadership of Reverend. Gene Tyson. At this celebration the State of Texas presented us with a historical marker. It was noted at that time that due to changing times, we are leaving behind the horse and buggy era and moving into the Space Age.

We go into the next century of God's work with a very dedicated membership, one of which is not to be afraid to stand up and be counted for God and His Kingdom. With this kind of membership, and God backing us, how can we fail? Our problems will be different but there will be

problems. We have come a long way and have learned much, the greatest lesson being to let go and let GOD.

We began our second hundred years with Mike Stovall and his family coming in June of 1971. Mike had been a chaplain in the US Navy.

In 1972, Robert Cavanaugh and his family came to our church and, since he had four children, a new parsonage was required. It was built on one acre of the land we had purchased in 1971. Reverend Cavanaugh stayed for four years and in 1976, Mike Phillips replaced him as our pastor. Due to his poor health he only remained at White's Chapel one year, and Hubert Taylor joined us until mid-year 1978. The conference sent us an interim pastor, Dean Franklin, who remained until he was replaced in 1980 by Woody McClendon. His stay only lasted one year, and in 1981 Dale Rider and his wife, Beverly, and four sons joined our congregation for the beginning of a tremendous growth period.

In the 1980's the community experienced a rapid growth rate and in by 1985 the small white sanctuary was terribly inadequate to meet the needs of this rapidly growing area. The Methodist Foundation became involved and decided that we needed their help to build a new church. With much fear and a little faith this little congregation of about 240 members borrowed \$400,000 from the Methodist Foundation and began to build a new church.

After many delays and battles . . . we finally broke ground and the new sanctuary was started. This church was designed to hold 300 people, a choir of thirty, eight Sunday School rooms and a large foyer. On Easter Sunday, 1988 we held our first worship in the new church and in the first full year of the building we added 100 new members.

The old building had become such a landmark to the community that we did not destroy it but turned it into a daycare center. Once again, the Methodist Foundation made a visit and with a loan

of \$50,000 we were able to meet all the state health requirements and open for business in August 1989.

Dale Rider and his family departed in 1991, and Robert Cavanaugh returned for a short time until mid 1992. In June 1992, White's Chapel was blessed by the arrival of John and Debbie McKellar and their children, Jay and Chandler. In 1995 the church purchased a new parsonage for John and his family. Under John's leadership the church kept up with the booming growth in our community and the congregation has more than doubled since his arrival, passing the one thousand member mark in 1995, and reaching 1,242 at present time.

This growth has necessitated the addition of an associate pastor, Katie Stellar and her husband, Mark. They have two children, Katelyn and Abigail. The continued growth in 1996 resulted in the need for another associate pastor and we welcomed Jo V. Ponder and her husband Lee.

This phenomenal growth has necessitated a building program of more than \$1.6 million. The sanctuary has been enlarged to seat 540 and forty in the choir loft. A larger steeple was erected over the sanctuary enclosing an electronic carillon. The carillon is a memorial to Mary Ann Marks, who was the church organist for twenty-five years and her husband Dale, who served White's Chapel faithfully in many capacities. New structures are being built housing a Family Life Center with kitchen facilities, a Youth Center, six offices, a choir rehearsal room and two additional classrooms. The new building was completed in late September 1996. We are well into the second hundred years of White's Chapel's history, and on the eve of our celebration can only say thank you GOD for all the blessing bestowed on this church which began so humbly with a log structure on this site 125 years ago.

Let us celebrate this anniversary for, with God's blessings, the best is yet to come!

1996

information from:
<http://www.cyberramp.net/wcume/wchistor.htm>

THE PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS

The name, Primitive Baptists, became popular in the early 1800s, when the term, primitive, conveyed the idea of originality rather than backwardness. . . . Primitive also conveys the idea of simplicity. This fits well and describes the church services consisting of preaching, praying, and singing.

The Primitive Baptist faith does not have a single founder or specific group responsible for organizing this Baptist tradition. There is, however, a generally agreed upon timeline of events culminating in the split of the Old School Baptists from the Missionary Baptists. This occurred when ten elders and ten brethren convened at Black Rock, Maryland on September 28, 1832. Elder Wm. Gilmore was chosen to moderate the proceedings and Gabriel Conklin presided as clerk for the writing of the Black Rock Address. Two elders, Wilson and Bowen, were not present at the meeting but authorized their identification on the address.

The Primitive Baptist faith is generally divided into three distinct divisions: Absolute Predestinarians, Moderates, and Progressives. Sydney Ahlstrom suggests that the Primitive Baptist membership in the United States doubled between the years of 1846 and 1890 (68,000 to 121,000). However, membership has declined sharply and a 1990 estimate by the Glenmary Research Center places the US membership at 49,234 members with 1,159 churches in activity (from Religious Movements Homepage Website).

According to F.E. Abernethy, Editor Emeritus of the Texas Folklore Society, one of the salient features of the group was their songbook:

Sacred Harp singing—named for B.F. White's 1844 songbook, Sacred Harp—is mainly the property of the Primitive Baptists. They are fundamentalists who have followed their selected portions of

the Bible to the letter and have arrived at a belief in predestination. For that reason they don't have Revivals and they don't send out missionaries, and they are easy to be with. You don't have to worry about their trying to save you or get you to join the church . . . [The] results of their belief in the doctrine of the elect are impressive in them. They move with a serenity that is born of a confidence in a life to come that is more than the usual mouthings of the wishful thinkers. . . . Primitive Baptists are also called Hardshell Baptists because of the uncrackable shell of their beliefs and their hard-headedness, and Foot-washing Baptists because of their observance of that little-practiced ritual.

The Hardshells don't have paid preachers or Sunday schools and they don't take up offerings and they don't have musical instruments. But they get along well enough without these adornments. . . . [They] decided that "Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" meant that they were supposed to sing acapella. Otherwise some of the strongest and most beautiful music in the world would have been marred beyond measure.

The families of Valentine Severe Allen, A.D. Bourland, (first name unknown) Thornsbury, James Whitfield Harrison, Taylor Blevins, and Edward Everett Dale were affiliated with the Brotherhood known as Primitive Baptists.

Brother Bourland, as he was called, remains the most significant name identified with the Primitive Baptists in our part of the county. No church was ever apparent, but the cemetery remains on the road named for the family and still functions today as the last resting place for many in the present.

Aurelius Delphus Bourland bought a tract of land in 1873, which included the parcel where the cemetery now stands, from Richard Franklin and Rosalenda Brown Allen. They had come from Missouri in 1847, possibly as part of the Missouri Colonists who settled in [and around Double

Springs], and received a grant from the Peters Colony, although it was not approved until 1850 and the 640 acres not awarded from Governor E.M. Pease until 1854.

Bourland was a preacher and was often away from home. After one trip, he returned to find that one of the children had died. Mrs. Bourland remembered her husband had said that when his time came he wanted to be buried on the hill beneath a cedar tree. Therefore, she buried the baby in that location and, from that time on, the spot became the burial site for others of the family as well as friends, some of whom had served in the Civil War on the side of the North as well as the South (Lyda White Collection; Bourland file).

By 1899, the settlers recognized the need for a public burial ground, and appointed Charles White, W.S. Bourland, and J.A. Hovencamp, to serve as a committee to buy two and one-half acres from the Bourlands for such use. Later Marvin Sharp and Tera Bourland Sharp gave additional land and the A.B. Harmonson family added another acre in his memory in 1877.

The entrance gate constructed of native sandstone and ironstone was built by the Works Projects Administration during the Depression (Harmonson, Mrs. A.B. "History of Bourland Cemetery," Typescript, circa 1950, Tarrant County College Heritage Library, Northeast Campus).

Brother Bourland, as he was called by all who knew him, was a Hard Shell Baptist Preacher, as well as a farmer. He lived and owned the place on the hill north of the school [Old Keller High School; now Keller Middle School]. R.E. Allen bought the land from the U.S. Government and sold it later to Mr. Bourland. The Hard Shell Baptists held services at Brother Bourland's home. It is said they came from miles around in wagons, buggies, horseback, walked, and any other way they could travel, to get

there for these services. The older folks sat in the chairs (as far as would go) and when there were no more chairs, they lined up along side the wall or sat upon quilts with the younger generations on the floor. They were hungry to hear the Word of God preached. When summer came, the services were held out in the yard under the trees. Later on they built a one-room church on Bates Street [in Keller]. After Mr. Bourland's death, the church was sold for a residence. Most of the members later joined the Missionary Baptists.

(Mrs. Guy Foster, *History of the Town of Athol—Keller, Tarrant County, Texas, From Information Furnished by Former Residents.* Typescript, circa 1950. Copy from Lyda White Collection.)

James Whitfield Harrison and his wife, Sallie Cathryn Foster Harrison, bought a farm west of [Westlake] on Henrietta Creek in 1884 where they lived in a log cabin. The Harrisons were charter members of the Henrietta Creek Primitive Baptist Church. During the week the church was known as the Lone Star School and all five of the daughters attended school there (Lyda White Collection; Harrison files).

Mr. & Mrs. Taylor Blevins gave land in the northwest corner of this place [White's Chapel, Southlake] for school, and the church community built a building called Mission Primitive Baptist, organizing a church. Mr. Taylor Blevins was the song leader, leading with the four-note Sacred Harp Book. The building was used as a school until it was consolidated with White's Chapel and Dove Union, now Chapel Hill. Some of the members died, while some moved away, and eventually, the church disbanded and the building was sold, to be moved away (Mattie Low, writing in Grapevine Area History, ed. Charles H. Young. Grapevine Historical Society. Fort Worth: Taylor Publishing Co., 1979 (18).

William Valentine Severe Allen, known in the area as Tine Allen, was born in 1850 in Tennessee. His father, John, was killed in the service of the Confederacy, and Tine, two siblings and his mother were left to fend for themselves. They migrated to Texas in 1870. The Mosaly family was neighbors and close friends and they came as far west as Arkansas where they settled. Tine carried on a courtship by correspondence with Mary Adaline, known as Mollie, the red-haired beauty of the Mosaly family. They married in 1874, and returned to Texas to Collin County.

In 1878, Tine, his brother-in-law, Eugene S. Mosaly, and his brother, Jud, bought land just east of Blue Mound, near Haslet, and began to raise cattle. It was not long before these industrious pioneers built a log house. The logs were hauled from Sherman, some eighty miles distant. The first child born in this house was Isaac Summer in 1880. One week later he died, and at the mother's request was buried just west of the home site. Thus began the Allen family cemetery.

They also planted crops, cotton among them, and eventually got into other enterprises such as drilling water wells for hire with a spudder rig that literally pounded its way into the earth. When wheat, oats, and barley became major crops, Tine purchased a thresher, which he operated in the area for many years. He became a stockholder in the Keller Mercantile Store and owned and operated a thriving hardware business known as "Tine Allen and Son."

In April of 1883, Tine and Mollie Allen united with the Denton Creek Primitive Baptist Church. In May 1908, he was ordained to the full ministry in which he served until his death in April 1916. Mollie passed away in 1924. Both are buried in the Allen family cemetery. (Lyda White Collection, Allen files)

It is from Edward Everett Dale's book, *The Cross Timbers: Memories of a North Texas Boyhood*

(Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), we learn not only the names of other “Brethren,” as they labeled each other, but differences between the Primitives and other Baptists, and some of what went on as Primitive Baptists met in the homes of the believers.

The Dales lived on a farm close to the Bourlands, between Roanoke and Keller, but closer to Double Springs than either town. He recalled of the Bourlands:

They belonged to my father’s church—the Primitive, or Old School, Baptist Church, commonly called the Hardshell Baptist Church (31).

He added: *My father read almost nothing except the Bible and his church paper, The Signs of the Times, devoted to the Old School Baptist cause and published in New York by Gilbert Bebee. Father knew the Bible almost from cover to cover, however, quoted passages from it constantly, and applied it to daily life (47).*

Dale refers to the *Denton Creek Church, which had preaching both Saturday and Sunday. The members were so few and so widely scattered that services were held only once a month, with two days devoted to preaching (101).* And he mentions that his brother, George, attended school at Lone Star, which was also used as a Primitive Baptist church.

Of most interest is Dale’s description of the denomination, itself:

Since my father was a devout member of the Primitive Baptist Church, whose members did not believe in Sunday Schools, none of us ever attended the Sunday Schools of the Methodists or Missionary Baptists, which were the leading denominations at Keller.

The Primitive, or Old School, Baptists, often called the “Hardshell Baptists,” are usually depicted as a grossly ignorant group who practice foot washing and oppose not only Sunday Schools but foreign missions. No doubt, many Hardshell Baptists in the mountainous regions of some of the states farther east are backward and ignorant even today, but this was not true of the group to which my father belonged.

Among the leading members of his church was Brother McKelvey, a Civil War veteran from Tennessee, who was for several years county treasurer of Denton County. Others were Brother McMakin of Georgia, who took the Atlanta Constitution and believed implicitly everything he read in it. Still others were prosperous farmers, including Brother Bourland, who lived only about a mile southeast of our home in one of the largest and most attractive houses in the community.

Although he did not believe in Sunday Schools, our father’s Church meant everything to him. He was never happier than when some of his “brethren” came to visit us or when he could visit some of them, and the weather was never too severe for him to attend church. For several years the nearest church of his faith was the Denton Creek Church, some ten miles from our home, but a year or so before we left the Cross Timbers a church was built at Keller. [Likely, the one built on Bates Street mentioned in Foster History of Athol-Keller.] This pleased Father very much, for then we could entertain in our home some of his Church Brothers who lived several miles away.

While Father and other members of his church derived a great deal of pleasure from church going, the fact that there were no Sunday Schools, prayer meetings, or ladies’-aid societies made the Old School Baptist Church somewhat less important as a social institution than were the other churches, which had such features, as well as an Epworth League, Christian Endeavor, or Baptist Young People’s Union (143-145).*

*The Epworth League was a temperance organization opposing “strong drink,” among other things.



PLEASANT HILL ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Advent Christian Church was founded in Salem, Massachusetts in 1860 and is rooted in the Adventist teachings begun by Baptist preacher, William Miller. Seventh Day Adventists share a common historical root, but Christian Adventists hold the first day of the week as the proper day for worship. In 1990, the Advent Christian Church had 23,794 members in 329 congregations. The church holds membership in the National Association of Evangelicals. (<http://ontruth.com/adventist.html>)

On February 7, 1883, a group of people met at Union Schoolhouse to organize the Second Advent Christian Church. The meeting was called to order by Elder John A. Cargile. The group was made up of B.N. Wilkerson, James Kimbrel, A.E. Rodolph, John Basden, J.M. Maxwell, John Haire, Walter Leggram, George Weaver, James Maxwell, Martha Basden, Martha Rutledge, Jennie Kemberel, Kate Garret, Lucy Reeves, Mattie Maxwell, Lula Basden, Mary Basden, and Minnie Bailey. Elder Joshua Miller was chosen as pastor. James A. Mayfield, R.H., Heath, Hiram Ice, Johnnie Bailey, Perry Bailey, T.J. Andrews, R.T Maxwell, Mary L. Haire, Sarah Dunkin, Florine Bailey, Emma Turnbow, Cora Leggram, Sudie Price, M.A. Heath, Kate Warren, Sarah L. Leggram, Sissie Heath, M.S. Dunkin, M.J. Young, Mattie Tatum, Mollie Rodolph, Emma Mayfield, Martha Wilkinson, and Sallie L. Andrews were added by transfer and baptism.

In 1907, Marion and Willie White gave the church a piece of land and a building was built. For years the Church was called White's Chapel

Second Advent Christian Church. In 1950, the name was changed to Pleasant Hill Advent Christian Church. In 1937, the original building was torn down and rebuilt by church members under the supervision of Charlie McCain.

In 1937, the Texas Convent of Advent Christian Churches bought some land joining the church and moved there from Everman, Texas. They now have dormitories, and a kitchen and dining room where a youth encampment and a conference of the state's churches is held during the last week of July each year.

In 1917, the church began an annual Mother's Day program and basket dinner. In 1974, this became Homecoming Day, and it was changed to the third Sunday in June. (*Grapevine Area History*, 33) 

Tabernacle, Pleasant Hill Advent Church
120 E. Southlake Boulevard, Southlake. Texas

Conference of Advent Christian Churches- 1949
This pavilion, or outdoor meeting hall, was built in 1949 for the Texas Conference of Advent Christian Churches, an organization which has met yearly at this site since 1937. the tabernacle is no longer used because of increased traffic noise on Southlake Boulevard (FM 1709) and lack of air conditioning.

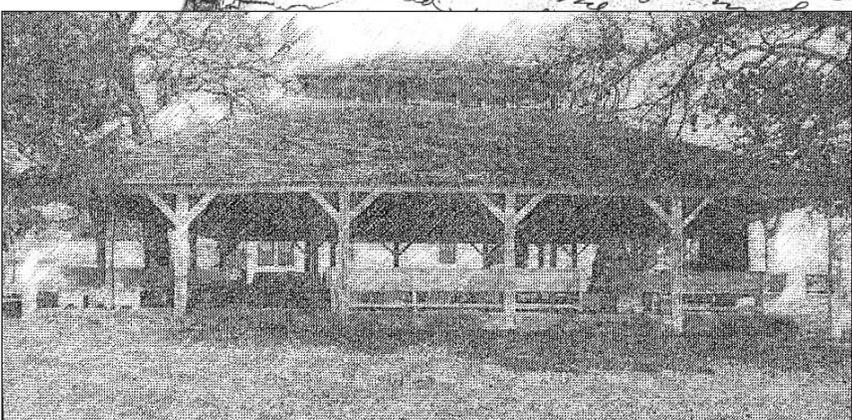
The complex also includes dormitories, kitchen, and dining room for the yearly encampment. Pleasant Hill Advent Church, built in 1937, is on adjacent property. This structure has been demolished but remains in the survey report for purposes of documentation. Had it remained, the property might have been eligible for National Register.

*Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey,
Selected Tarrant County Communities
Northeast Tarrant County – Southlake, 1990*

Confession and Covenant
 of the
 Second Advent Christian Church at
 Union Schoolhouse near Grapevine in
 Tarrant County Texas
 Set in order by Eld. John A. Bargie
 on the 7th day of February 1883.

Whereas,
 The grace of God that bringeth salvation
 hath appeared unto all men, teaching us
 that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,
 we should live soberly, righteously, and godly
 in this present world; looking for that blessed
 hope and the glorious appearing of the great
 God and our savior Jesus Christ, who gave
 himself for us that he might redeem us from
 all iniquity and purify unto himself a
 peculiar people zealous of good works.

Titus 2:11-14
 And Whereas,
 We have turned to God from idols, to
 serve the living and true God, and to
 wait for his son from heaven, whom he
 raised from the dead, Jesus, which
 is to come"



THOMAS EASTER CEMETERY

by Michael E. Patterson

Member, Tarrant County Historical Commission

The Thomas Easter Cemetery lies in the Easter survey of 480 acres (Tarrant County Abstract #474) in Tarrant County, Texas, on the north side of the 2800 block of Southlake Boulevard, in present-day Southlake, Texas. Two elm trees and a few field-stone markers are now the only landmarks at the gravesites.

As one of the county's first permanent settlers, Thomas Easter came to Texas before July 1, 1855,¹ and arrived in northeast Tarrant county by September of the same year, when his wife, Charity joined the Lonesome Dove Baptist Church near their home.² Thomas was born about 1823 in Virginia.³ He and Charity were married about 1845, probably in Missouri. She was a native Kentuckian, born about 1820.⁴ The Easter family migrated to Texas from Missouri as colonists in the Peters Colony, an impresario grant made by the government of the Republic of Texas to a private company in the hope of stimulating emigration to North Texas.

On July 17, 1855, Thomas Easter patented the first two tracks of land which he received from the state. The first, on which the cemetery was later started, contained 480 acres. On August 30, 1859, he patented another tract of 160 acres which lay adjacent to the north of his first patent.⁵

The cemetery began while the Easter family owned the property. Thomas Easter died before June 12, 1876, when Joshua Cook, the administrator of his estate, filed a petition for probate with the county government.⁶ Charity Easter was still alive on August 16, 1881 when she, with her son and daughter-in-law, William and Margaret E. Easter,

deeded a 1.25 acre tract of their land to "Thad Woods and Jesse G. Human, School of Trustees of Easter School Community Tarrant County Texas... and their successors in office." One acre on the west end of the tract was stipulated for use as a cemetery, with remainder of the land to be used:

As a site for a school house and a place of religious worship so long as the said school community and neighborhood use it for a school house and place of worship and should said school community and neighborhood fail to keep up the land for the purposes above mentioned then the tract or parcel of land to be used for a graveyard.⁷

Charity Easter died before April 10, 1883, when William and Margaret Easter deeded the property surrounding the 1.25 acres reserve to J. J. Joyce. In the deed, the Easters specifically referred to the tract of "1 acre conveyed to trustees for school house and grave yard."⁸ When Joyce transferred the property to W. J. Crowley on December 31, 1866, specific mention was again made of the reserved tract.⁹

The Easter School, established between the cemetery, operated as late as December 1895, when it was located by name on a widely-circulated county map of the day.¹⁰ No records have yet been discovered of what denomination, if any, used the school house for worship services.

The property surrounding the cemetery remained in the hands of the Crowley family until February 21, 1925, when the heirs of W. J. Crowley deeded the tract to D. E. Box. No mention of the cemetery of the 1.25-acre reserve was made in this

or in any subsequent deed to the present day.¹¹ In 1936, the property passed to Mr. and Mrs. James Daniel Davis.¹² Throughout the time J. D. Davis owned the tract of land, he was careful to plow around the remaining tombstones and to retain as much of the integrity of the cemetery as possible. However, farming operations and the incursions of farm animals gradually caused more and more of the stones to fall and be scattered. Mr. Davis died in 1974, and his wife died two years later.¹³ After their deaths, property was inherited by their children. Their son, Malcolm M. Davis, received the portion on which the cemetery sits.

In the latter part of 1975, several interested local historians visited the cemetery, took a number of photographs and began researching records concerning the Easter family, the school, and the cemetery. On a Sunday morning in March, or April 1976, the stones were intentionally moved by the property owner,¹⁴ and piled in an erosion ditch along a fence about one hundred twenty-five yards northeast of the gravesites.

A survey of the cemetery made in 1976 showed several stones marking six identifiable graves. Only one had any readable inscription: A capital "C" and a clearly readable "Easter." The grave was that of an adult and may have been marking the grave of Charity Easter.¹⁵ Several elderly residents in the area of the cemetery remember that years ago the cemetery was much more visible than it was by the 1970's, and one informant estimated that in his childhood, there were about twenty visible gravestones.¹⁶

End Notes

- ¹ Seymour V. Conner, *The Peters Colony of Texas*, (Austin, Texas: The Texas State Historical Association, 1959), p.244
- ² Lonesome Dove Baptist Church, *Minutes*, microfilm of originals at Fort Worth Public Library, Fort Worth, Texas
- ³ U.S. Federal Census, Tarrant County, Texas, 1850, p.87
- ⁴ *Ibid*, also 1880 Census, District 94, p.2
- ⁵ Tarrant County, Texas, Tax Records, Abstracts #458, 474
- ⁶ Tarrant County, Texas Estate Records, "Estate Records of Tarrant County, Texas: Abstracts of original Papers," in Fort Worth Genealogical Society, *Footprints*, Vol.21, No.1. (Feb. 1978), p65
- ⁷ Tarrant County, Texas, Deed Records, Vol. 100, pp. 482-484
- ⁸ *Ibid*, Vol. 49, pp. 543-545
- ⁹ *Ibid*, Vol. 62, p. 543
- ¹⁰ Sam Street's Map of Tarrant County, Texas, December, 1895 (Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Map Publishing Co., 1895), original copy at Tarrant County Junior College, Northeast Campus, Local history Center, Hurst, Texas (hereafter TCJC_LHC)
- ¹¹ Tarrant County deeds, Vol. 863, p.370
- ¹² *Ibid*, Vol. 1317, p. 37
- ¹³ Grapevine Historical Society, *Grapevine Area History*, (Dallas, Texas: Texas Map Publishing Co., 1979), p.172
- ¹⁴ Mrs. Brenda Eubanks, interview with Patterson at Southlake, Texas, July 15, 1981
- ¹⁵ Michael E. Patterson, "Abandoned Pioneer Cemeteries of Northeast Tarrant County, Texas: A Preliminary Survey," unpublished MS, 1976, at TCJC-LHC
- ¹⁶ John E. Foust, Sr. (1898-1978), interview with Patterson at Grapevine, Texas, June 24, 1976

Five Churches Form Center of Roanoke Spiritual Activity

By AL COLEMAN
NTSC Journalism Student

From one church in 1882 to five churches today, Roanoke has held a friendly attitude among her churches. In the early days, all the people worshipped in a "Union Church," which they collectively built and supported.

Today the five churches — Baptist, Church of Christ, Fundamental Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian—have their own buildings.

One by one the denominations became able to build their own churches and to afford full or part-time ministers. In the Union Church each denomination took time about giving the services. They have kept this friendly attitude by continually working together, dismissing for another's revivals, and other such gestures.

Presbyterians First

The Presbyterians were the first to establish their own church in 1883. Rev. E. B. Chaney founded it, and Rev. C. M. Hutton was its first pastor. W. L. George of Ft. Worth is the only living charter member.

At present the church has about 30 regular members, but has no pastor. Cecil Lang is filling in until one can be assigned. Earl Price was the church's last pastor. He left recently for work in Austin.

One of the most outstanding ministers the church has had was Rev. Herbert Springall, who is now home missions superintendent of the Dallas District.

Methodist Church Founded

The Methodists were the next to form their own church in 1907. Among the charter members still alive are Mrs. J. R. Cade and Mrs. Henry Howe.

One of the church's earliest members, Mrs. John McKinney, gave her home and all her money to the church. She even secretly gave the church her son sent her each month to live on.

One of the church's early pas-

tors, Rev. Henry Ratliff, then a student preacher, is now at Laurel Heights Church in San Antonio. Rev. Bruce L. Medford, a student at Perkins School of Theology, SMU, is the present pastor. Medford graduates in June, and this is his first appointment. His wife and six months-old baby live with them in the newly-remodeled parsonage.

A hundred members are listed on the church roll. It has been a half-time church until this year, and this is the first time in 30 years the pastor has lived in Roanoke. It has a youth group of about 12 members and carries on a regular program with occasional parties. Support of the orphan's home and yearly revivals plays a large part in church activity.

Baptist Church Largest

The Baptists were the next to build their own building in 1910 under the pastorate of Rev. W. H. Carden. Among the charter members were C. A. Cowan, T. L. Cox, E. C. Buel, and J. M. Medlin. This is the largest church in town with a present membership of 225. Rev. Paul Carmichael, a student at Southwest Seminary in Ft. Worth, is the present pastor.

Among other works, the church has added six new Sunday school rooms.

Church of Christ

The Church of Christ still has its building where the Union Church stood. The original building was torn down in 1938, and the lumber was used in the new one. The bell in the Union Church was given to the city for fire alarms.

Some of the charter members were E. L. Manire and Mrs. R. A. Carruth. Today, Byron Nelson, nationally famous golfer, teaches a young people's class. His father is an elder, and his mother teaches a ladies' class. Among the other prominent members are Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Lassen. Lassen is secretary of the church, and his wife teaches a woman's class on Wednesday afternoons.

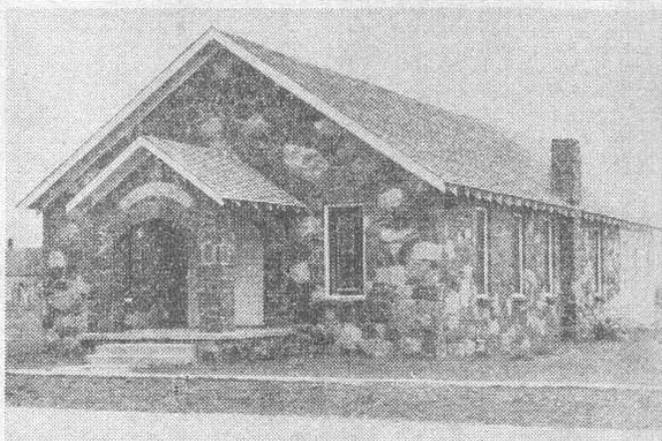
Besides the regular support of charity and their orphan's home, the church gives each fifth Sunday offering to the orphan's home, and has adopted a child from the home.

Fundamental Baptists

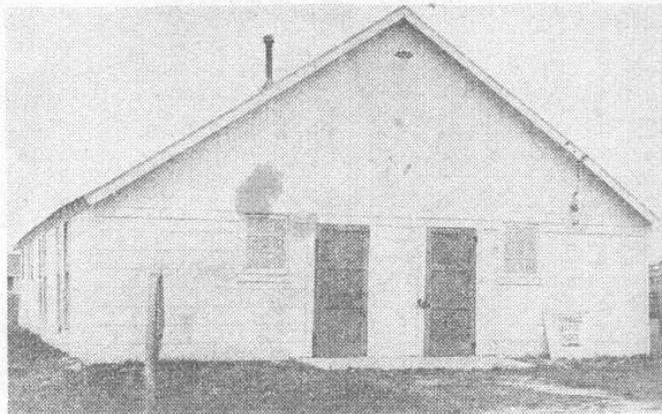
Newest in the family of Roanoke churches is the Tabernacle Baptist Church, founded by the Fundamental Baptists. This was organ-



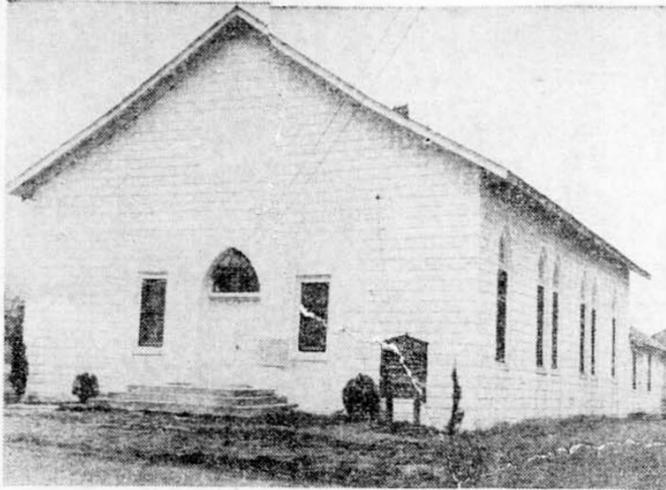
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH — First congregation to establish their own church in Roanoke was the Presbyterian, established in 1883. Previously there was one Union Church with all denominations participating. At present the church has 30 regular members but no minister. The vacancy created when the last pastor, Earl Price, left for work in Austin has not yet been filled.



CHURCH OF CHRIST—Standing on the location of the original old Union Church is the Church of Christ in Roanoke. The original building was torn down in 1938, and the lumber used in the new one.



TABERNACLE BAPTIST—Organized in October, 1946, by the Fundamental Baptists, the Tabernacle Baptist Church of Roanoke is the town's newest church. Under the pastorate of Rev. Paul Sizemore, the church has grown from 10 charter members to about 20 today.



BAPTIST CHURCH — Largest of the five Roanoke churches is the Baptist, above, which was founded in 1920 and now has a membership of 225. Rev. Paul Carmichael, student at Southwestern Theological Seminary at Fort Worth, is the present pastor.



METHODIST CHURCH—Founded in 1907, the Methodist Church in Roanoke is one of the town's oldest and now has 100 members on the church roll. This year for the first time the church has a regular pastor living in Roanoke. He is the Rev. Bruce L. Medford, serving his first appointment. He graduates from the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas in June.

Young Folks Today Same As In His Youth, Lark Heath Recalls

By JANE LOFTIS
NTSC Journalism Student

"Young folks haven't changed much since I was a boy," says Lark Heath, 61-year-old farmer who was born and reared in the Roanoke Community.

"P eopel ha daltoo ffini nth sueo People had a lot of fun in those make their own fun. We did a pretty good job, too," he assured with a smile. The country was parcellly setled and people seemed more glad to see each other at get-togethers at the old-time picnics and camp meetings when the Roanoke man was young.

Heath, who doesn't consider himself a real old-timer, talked of his youth and his boyhood days with a twinkle in his blue eyes, his snow-white hair shining above his smooth, rosy cheeks. Occasionally he reached up to the working cap he wore, pushing it back or pulling it closer to his head.

Once a year a camp meeting was held at John's Well near Roanoke, Heath recalled. At these times families packed their things together and came to the meeting to stay for two weeks at a time. There were regular services in the morning and evening. Men who lived nearby went home to do their farm chores and returned to the meetings.

"We looked forward more to the camp meetings than to Christmas," says Heath.

Picnics were held for two or three days at a time, much the same as the camp meetings. One of the most important parts of these picnics were the bottles of pop, remembers Heath. These forerunners of Coco Cola and other bottle drinks were fitted with a cap which was removed by a spring-

loud popping sound occurred. When the bottles were emptied the caps were returned to original position and were ready to be refilled.

For Christmas there was a week's celebration, he explained. Beginning every afternoon at three, everyone danced. They danced until midnight, and then there was midnight supper for all. All the best people danced in those days, but there was never any trouble at the dances, Heath says.

These special occasions were supplemented by frequent horseback rides to visit young women through out the county.

"I had three horses that I kept ridden down all the time," smiles the Roanoke farmer.



LARK HEATHS AT HOME—Standing in front of their beautiful colonial farm home west of Roanoke are Mr. and Mrs. Lark Heath, long-time residents of the Community. Heath is one of the community's successful farmers and cattlemen, and Mrs. Heath is active in women's affairs in the community. She is slated to become the new president of the Thursday Club, one of Roanoke's active women's organizations.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, KELLER

And Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." These words had no less influence on Christian people in this area than in many other towns and villages across the nation where first came the railroad, then the people and with the people came the church.

History of the first Baptist Church at Keller cannot be told without first mentioning the community. Keller is located on the Texas and Pacific railway connecting Texarkana and Fort Worth. The right of way was purchased during the late 1870s and 1880s. The first train traveled these tracks on May 9, 1881. On July 19 of that same year, the forty-acre town site of Athol was surveyed. A few months later, the name was changed to Keller, honoring J.C. Keller, who was the foreman of the construction crew.

Before 1881, the Stage Line that serviced the area was located at Double Springs, a village located just a few hundred yards north of Mount Gilead Baptist Church. There was a cotton gin, a gristmill and a merchandise store on Bear Creek, just to the southeast of us. In 1879 Mount Gilead relocated its property to a site on Bear Creek, about the corner of Elaine and Bear Creek Road. The building was erected as a "school house" with church privileges reserved. During the year of 1881, some of the church members wanted to move back to the old church site, but since the railway was completed, others who lived in this area wished to stay at the present site and form the Keller Church. The change was made and Mount Gilead lettered out twenty persons in 1882, thus the beginning of First Baptist Church of Keller.

Little is known of the activities during these first few years, but "On Saturday before the third Sunday in February 1884" a formal organizational

meeting was held. Since the Keller Church was not affiliated with the West Fork Association, which was meeting in Roanoke in 1884, it is most probable that this was necessary before becoming a part of that body.

Deacons R. I. McCain, William Crawford, Sr., and W. Prewett, Sr. were elected delegates to the association. The influence of these men remains with us today, as the descendants of the sixth generation are now active in our church. The pastor was Brother Elihu Newton and R.F. Moore was Church Clerk.

The report to the Association was:

Membership in 1883—19

Additions by letter—5

Additions by baptism—1

Total membership in 1884—25

On October 14, 1886 the First Baptist Church of Keller and eleven other churches formed what is now known as the Tarrant Baptist Association.

Services continued in the schoolhouse on Bear Creek until 1887. On December 13, 1886, R.F. Moore representing the Baptist Church, S. M. Wilson representing the Presbyterian Church, and R. Whitley of the Methodist Church, bought from D. M. Hightower and his wife, W. E. Hightower, the land on which the Presbyterian Church now stands. These denominations raised funds and erected a building, which is now known as the Henderson Union Church. The different faiths were assigned different Sundays to be responsible for services. The Baptist group held services on the third Sunday of each month. Conference was held on Saturday before the third Sunday.

By 1909, the Baptist congregation had outgrown these quarters. A new location was selected on the northeast corner of Main and Price Street.

The property was purchased on a Saturday before the fourth Sunday in September 1910. Plans for the new building were submitted for approval at the cost of \$2,000.00. In 1912, interest in the Henderson Church was sold. The building was dedicated November 1913, with all indebtedness paid. Worship had been held in the building for more than two years. In 1910, Brother J.R. Touchstone was pastor, J.T. Adams, Sunday School Superintendent, and Pelham Read (now Mrs. A.B. Sammons) was organist.

The Keller Church has always supported the Missions Programs. Amounts given reflect the economy of the times. In 1914, in addition to contributions to the Mission, \$1,115.00 was given to the Seminary Endowment Fund.

In July 1915, a piano was purchased to replace the organ.

May 6, 1916, the church voted to build an addition to the "church house" and to "begin work immediately."

In January 1917, a Baptist Young People's Union was organized and mid-week prayer services were held on Thursday night of each week. The church roll listed 171 active members and the Board of Deacons was increased to twelve.

Communion Services are seldom mentioned in the early minutes, but it has been learned from one of the early members that the custom here was like that of most of the smaller churches of the period. The wine was served in a glass such as we would refer to as a water tumbler. There was usually one glass for each section of the church. The wine was passed and each member sipped from the same glass. The unleavened bread was made by some member of the church, usually a Deacon's wife. In 1914, the church voted to observe communion the second Sunday in January, March, May, July, September, and November. In later years, the observance was held semi-annually. Today, this ordinance is held quarterly.

1919 saw the results of more affluent times and larger membership. The pastor's salary was increased from \$600.00 to \$750.00 per year. In October of the same year, the church voted to pass collection plates every Sunday. Up to this time, financing of the church was taken care of by the appointed committee. The annual budget, voted in 1919, was \$1,000.00. It was also reported in December that \$9,990.00 had been pledged toward the \$15,000.00 the church had been asked to raise for the \$75,000.00 campaign.

1924 brought the beginning of holding the business conferences on the first Wednesday night in each month.

In 1926 electric lights were installed in the church building. Prior to that, lighting was by carbide fixtures which hung from the ceiling; however, at this time it has not been documented that these were to the original building. While in the Union Henderson building the lighting was by kerosene lamps. During the same year 1926, pledge cards and envelopes were ordered and financing of the church through Sunday school began.

In June 1933, the Brotherhood of the church was organized. By this time the Great Depression and come about over the country, and the pastor's salary was dropped to \$30.00 per month. The church furnished a parsonage for which the rental was \$6.00 per month. During this financial struggle, two members of the church gave wood to heat the building, and two other members volunteered to cut and bring it to the premises. When we entered into the present comfortable building, it's easy to forget that none of the early Sunday School rooms were heated.

In 1936, the Church was still struggling, but a full-time pastor was called. The salary was \$50.00 per month.

1939 saw the change of heating from the coal and wood stoves to butane. The butane system and eight stoves were purchased at the cost of \$219.45.

Some of the Sunday school classes bought stoves for their rooms.

In 1941, the second addition to the church building was made.

In 1944, the first cooling unit was purchased. Needless to say, this unit was the old water-cooler type, placed in the window.

In 1945, the porch under the belfry was enclosed making a foyer. This added great warmth to the sanctuary and furnished a place to remove heavy coats and hats. Another highlight of this year was the purchase of a parsonage located on the northeast corner of Minnie and Main Street.

In 1951, a lot was purchased adjoining the church property on the East and the annex was erected.

1955 brought further progress. The parsonage was sold and another house was bought at 358 Price Street.

As the church continued to grow, larger quarters were needed, and in 1963, a building campaign was launched. A three-acre tract was purchased on the corner of Jessie and Loraine Streets. The present sanctuary, with educational buildings to accommodate 400 people was constructed. The first services held in this building were on the last Sunday in December 1964.

In 1971, the parsonage on Price Street was sold and a new brick home for the pastor was built on Elaine.

Forty-three pastors have served our church. Six ministers have been ordained here, and one minister of music.

During the past three years our church has experienced it's greatest growth in membership. Today we dedicate to the Lord and his work a new educational building. From a membership of 20 in 1882, to a membership of 701 in 1975, we face our greatest challenge.

Lyda White Collection, First Baptist Church history written in 1976 for the Bicentennial. 

Records indicate that some Baptists met at the Henderson Union Church in Keller, which contained Methodists, Presbyterians and Church of Christ, called then Christians, on alternating Sundays.

Some of the Baptist congregants at the Henderson Union Church may have been William G. and Eliza Polk Nuckolls who migrated from Virginia to Tennessee and then to Texas in the 1880s, bringing with them their children and three former slaves, one known as Mammy, a boy whose name is not known and his sister, Neeta. According to local historian Lyda White:

At the end of a day of hard work, he (Nuckolls) brought his diary to date, a habit begun in his youth. Being well educated, he read a great deal, was an excellent student of the Bible, and had a great respect for detailed accuracy. This latter often led him to question the statements of others less informed. One such incident occurred during a sermon at the Union Church in Keller. Shocked and embarrassed, his wife heard him say to the minister, "Brother Spann, that is not correct." The answer was, "Brother Nuckolls, I'll come to your house and we'll talk it out." As usual, Brother Nuckolls proved his point with no ill feeling, and the two men remained lifelong friends.

Church records reveal that a certain member sent a letter which was read to the church which stated that "if the church permitted Brother Nuckoll's Negro to attend church" she desired "letters of dismissal" for herself and her daughter. The action of the church was postponed until the next meeting. At the June meeting, the letters were granted. Apparently the church did not feel that it was wrong for a Negro to worship with them.

Lyda White Collection; First Baptist Church minutes for May 1895.

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, KELLER

The first record we have of the Presbyterians meeting, then known as the Cumberland Presbyterians, was in 1885. They began meeting in the home of Mr. Bates, father of W. A. Bates. He lived just east of the Mount Gilead Church. On October 1, 1886 at 11:00 O'clock, W. A. Bates, S. P. Clark, L. R. Cowan, were elected and ordained Ruling Elders and Mr. Coleman as Deacon. The Reverend Albert Rogers and Reverend Rippetoe were the presiding ministers. Reverend Rippetoe was the first pastor. On December 13, 1886, Mr. R.W. Whitley of the EME Church, S. M. Wilson of the Cumberland Presbyterian, and Mr. R. F. Moore of the Missionary Baptist Church bought from D. M. Hightower and wife the land on which the Presbyterian now stands for the price of one dollar. Three churches used the church building. It was known as the Henderson Union Church House. The Baptists had two Sundays, the Methodist and Presbyterian one each with a Union Sunday School in the afternoon. In the summer of 1912, the building was almost completely destroyed by a cyclone. In the summer of 1912, a congregational meeting was held by the members of the Presbyterian Church and they voted to incorporate the church and bought the Methodist and Baptist interests.

Mrs. Guy Foster, *History of Keller*, typescript, earlier cited



METHODIST CHURCH KELLER 1897

The Methodists in Keller held their church conference in 1897 at the Henderson Union Church. Records indicate that thirty-seven attended the conference in 1900. The church was in a circuit with Smithfield and Diamond Hill. Services were one Sunday a month at 11:00 am with a Union Sunday School in the afternoon. One pastor reported that in 1909 he preached 132 times, had fifteen additions at Keller, fifty-seven on the entire circuit, which included Smithfield, Keller, Harwell Chapel, Oak Grove, and Glad School House, made 374 visits, traveled 2,500 miles in a buggy, and received \$600 in salary. The Methodists continued to worship at the Henderson Union facility until 1913 when the Whitley family gave land for the construction of a church. The building was twenty-eight by forty feet in size, had handmade benches and a large wood burning stove. In 1933, a twenty-one by twenty-one foot addition provided Sunday school space, and in the 1940s, stained glass windows were installed

Lyda White Collection: Methodist Church file.



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