

Church was integrated for a time in the 1800's

First Baptist Church grew out of early 1800's revival

By Lois D. Young

The First Baptist Church of Ahoskie — the town's oldest white church — was first a mission point of the Meherrin Church and grew out of a revival in 1802 or 1803.

The mission then was organized into a church in 1804 with 67 members. A log building was erected and then replaced very soon with a larger one.

A modern mission movement began in England and spread to the new United States of America. Its mission spirit and influence was mingled with the evangelistic spirit so this church has always been evangelistic and missionary.

Morris serves for 21 years

Elder Hillary Morris — preachers were called elders until 1900 — was the first pastor and served for 21 years. The first gifts were reported in shillings and pence.

Elder George Williams served the church for eight years, and when he left, it had 182 members.

Black members dismissed

Elder John Nowell of Colerain was called to be pastor in 1836 and remained until his death in 1859. He had one of the greatest pastorates in the history of the church. During 1846, the third meeting house was erected. In 1854 many of the Negro members got letters of

dismissal and then organized Pleasant Plains Baptist Church, north of town.

Elder B.B. Williams of Mars Hill was called to be called to be pastor after Nowell's death. He was the Civil War pastor and served as a lieutenant in the Confederate Army. Capt. J.M.C. Luke was a member of the church and then served as pastor from 1864-68.

Dr. John Mitchell was the only preacher to serve in two pastorates. He contributed freely of his means to support Wake Forest College, Chowan College and the Baptist orphanage at Thomasville.

Dr. Robert R. Savage of Como

had the third-longest pastorate, 1872-1885. Elder H.T. Williams then served from 1888 to 1889 with an annual salary of \$350. During this time the first missionary society was organized with Mrs. Betty Vann as president.

While R.D. Cross was pastor, W.W. Mitchell gave two acres of land for a home for the pastor. The home stood at the corner of Catherine Creek Road and Parker Avenue.

Building erected

In January, 1901, Rev. L.M. Curtis came from Aulander to be pastor for seven years. He resigned in 1907 because of ill health and was followed by Rev. M.A.

Adams. During his pastorate, the church building that is now the First Presbyterian Church was erected.

Rev. C.L. Dowell served as pastor from 1911-17, and he secured

Copeland, F.D. Flythe, C.C. Hogard and G.J. Newbern.

Work was begun in March, 1928. The roof was completed and the windows were boarded up, but the work ceased. The worst depression

Under the Rev. Oscar Creech, who served from 1925 to 1951, the current lot was purchased and sanctuary constructed.

pledges and cash for a hospital. World War I broke out and this idea was abandoned and money returned.

Then came a very out-spoken Rev. F.T. Collins as full-time pastor. His salary was \$1,800.

Rev. E.J. Isenhower led the church for two years, and he was followed by the beloved Oscar Creech.

Rev. Creech was pastor from 1925 to 1951. His leadership was responsible for the purchase of the lot and building of the present church on Main Street. He was financially assisted by the Ladies' Aid Society.

The building committee consisted of Dr. C.G. Powell, J. Bailey Barnes, A.M. Brown, R.R.

since the Civil War was arising, and work was slow. However, in May, 1930, the grown floor of the building was completed and the first service was held.

9-year project

On April 27, 1937, the announcement was made that the building was completed, nine years after the project started.

Pastors that followed Rev. Creech were W.F. Milne, Isaac Terrell, Billy Mobley and Jim Langford. Dr. Jesse Croom is the present pastor.

This church stands grandly on the corner of Main and West streets, signifying years of devotion by Christian leaders and loyal members serving Christ in Ahoskie.



First Baptist Church

For many years the First Baptist Church at the corner of Main and West streets has served the religious community. Rev. Dr. Jesse Croom is the current pastor of the oldest and largest white

church in Ahoskie. The church originally was started as a mission and the sprang up from a revival in 1802 or 1803. It was organized in 1804 with 67 members.

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