

HISTORY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, HEBRON

BY

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The church now known as First Baptist Church, Hebron, located at the corner of FM Road 544 and Hebron Parkway, Town of Hebron, Texas, in the southeast part of Denton County, near Collin and Dallas County lines, was organized September 9, 1883 at the Willow Springs School. James Newton Rayzor in his book The History of the Denton County Baptist Association, published 1936, state the church at that time was named "Big Valley Baptist Church".¹ Although Mr. Rayzor lists messengers to the annual Denton County Baptist Associational meetings as being from "Big Valley" church through the year 1893,² the following indicates a possible renaming of the church in 1886. Miss Mona Morgan of Dallas has a book of some early minutes of the church. The first entry date is Feb. 27, 1886; the last Dec. 23, 1888. The first item in the book is as follows:

"Willow Springs - February 27, 1886

The committee appointed by the Sunday School for the purpose of drawing up of a Constitution and By-laws, met and elected Mr. Harrison chairman and J. W. Amery secretary pro-tem, and drew up the following articles.

Article 1 Name

This School shall be called the Willow Springs Union Sabbath School

Article II Object

The object of this Sabbath School shall be:

To help and encourage the diligent study of the Words of God.
To maintain the observance of one day in seven, as a day of rest from unnecessary labor-consecrated to good words and deeds.
To work in union with all Churches of Christ for the extension of the Kingdom of God throughout the world.

Article III Officers

The officers of this School shall consist of a Superintendent and Ass't. Sup't., Secretary and Ass't. Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, Organist and Ass't. Organist.

Article IV and V (these two articles were incorporated to read):

Superintendent, Ass't. Sup't., Secretary, Treasurer, and Librarian shall constitute a standing executive committee; and shall read and report proceeding, and state of the School on the last Sunday of each quarter of the year, to the people, and everyone is invited to take part in it.

Article VI The Legislative power shall reside with the whole School, called together by previous notice, given at least one week in advance, with the following exceptions. (the exceptions were marked out, leaving the impression that they were not accepted).

Article VII All elections of Officers and Teachers shall be by ballot. (part of this article was scratched out to read):
election of Officers by the School shall be by ballot unless rendered unnecessary by a unanimous choice."

Although there is not a Charter Member list in the earlier records, Mr. Rayzor list the following as being Charter Members of the "Big Valley Baptist Church".³

Mr. and Mrs. John Turner
Mr. and Mrs. O. D. Riley
Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Combs
Mr. and Mrs. Ed McMurry
Mr. and Mrs. T. C. McCormick
Mrs. Allen Hunter
Robert Everett
Mary Chandler
N. J. Idom (some believe this could be Isom)

E. C. Bramblett was the first pastor, and after a year was succeeded by John Turner, who after a year was succeeded by R.G.M. Eiland in 1888. During the ministry of R.G.M. Eiland, the church united with the Cemetery Hill Union Church.⁴ The word united is used because of a program in the possession of Mona Morgan of the celebration of the twenty-second Anniversary of the Cemetery Hill Union Sunday School. This celebration was held Saturday, May 30, 1896, making 1874 their organizational date. (see attached)

The following are various articles taken from the book of minutes mentioned earlier: An entry in the minutes of Feb. 6, 1887, under the Willow Springs heading, includes the following statement: "Mr. Joseph Morgan, as one of the Trustees, extended an invitation to the school to hold their meetings in the future at Cemetery Hill. Mr. Warner made a motion that we accept the Trustee's invitation to hold our meetings at Cemetery Hill, seconded by Mr. Lord. Motion carried. The weather being so unfavorable, very few were in attendance, it was so late the Supt. thought it best to have no Sunday School. Sunday School was dismissed by Supt. to meet at Cemetery Hill on Sunday Feb. 13/87. (Signed) W. C. Furneaux". The following Sunday this report was made: "Report of the Cemetery Hill Union Sabbath School, Feb. 13/87. There was no Sunday School on account of bad weather. (Signed) W.C. Furneaux, Sect." The next week the report was also under the Cemetery Hill heading, but the following week the minutes revert back to the Willow Springs heading: "Report of Willow Springs Union Sabbath School. Feb. 28/87. School opened with singing and prayer by Mr. J. H. Morgan. Choir Master absent, J. W. Everett acted instead. Sect. late. Teacher of Ladies Class absent. Mrs. James Miller was appointed teacher. Teacher of Primary Class No. 2 was absent. Mrs. Chandler taught the class. (a listing of classes showed attendance of 101) J. H. Furneaux made a motion that the name of the Sunday School be changed from Willow Springs to Cemetery Hill. Seconded by J. H. Dudley. Action to be taken in two weeks. School closed with singing. (Signed) W. C. Furneaux, Sect." The following week the report was under the heading of Willow Springs. Then on March 13/87, the report was headed Cemetery Hill Union Sabbath School and included the following statement: "J. H. Furneaux made a motion that the name of the school be changed from Willow Springs Union Sabbath School to Cemetery Hill Union Sabbath School. Seconded by

C. S. Solomon. Motion carried." All other entries are under the Cemetery Hill heading. It was interesting to note that School was always opened with singing and prayer by Mr. J. H. Morgan, and that School was always held in the afternoons, either 2:30 or 3:00 o'clock. There was never any mention of preaching service. Short talks were usually made by the Superintendent or some other member who had been assigned to do so the previous week. The following is a list of the different classes that was included in the back of the minute book:

Gents Class: J. W. Everett, W. Wheeler, Dennis Goslin, William Goslin, George Goslin, Bascom Harrison, Henry Jackson, J. L. Jackson, J. J. Morgan, J. H. Morgan, Cale Miller, James Miller, Frank Jackson, Roy Simpson, Thad McCormick, T. Goslin, R. M. Everett, E. McMurry, Harrison Nix.

Ladies Class: Misses Polly Furneaux, Cora Dudley, Ollie Thompson, Emma Huskey, Emma Simpson, Belle Brunell, Mollie Gordon, Allie Atkins, Minnie Miller, Bessie Morgan, Barbara Dixon, Ulah Warner, Ellen Riley, Mrs. J. W. Everett, Mrs. C. S. Solomon, Mrs. Fanny Jackson, Mrs. McElroy, Mrs. Frank Jackson.

Mixed Bible Class: Mrs. J. H. Dudley, Mrs. William Dudley, Mrs. John Jackson, Mrs. Joseph Morgan, Miss Mary Morgan, C. Lord, J. H. Furneaux, E. B. Lace, J. H. Dudley, (?) Chapman, W. R. Dudley, C. S. Solomon.

Youth Class: Henley Morgan, John Furneaux, Andrew Jackson, Frank Jackson, Allen Harrison, Ted Morgan, Frank McKamy, Roy McKamy, Henry Chandler.

Boys Class: Harry Lord, Lon Dudley, John Isom, Lee McKamy, Andrew Fouts, Challey Smith, Arthur Smith, John Kennedy, Willie Huskey, Dan Isom, Bert Chandler, Joe Chandler, Willie Greenhouse, Harry Greenhouse, Willie Jackson, Willie Everett.

Primary Class: (These names were written on the back page of the book; many were unreadable, others completely worn off). Myrtle Dudley, Mary Dudley, Allen Fouts, Hattie Jackson, Callie McCormick, William McElroy, Mattie McCormick, (?) Dudley, (?) Fox, (?) Fox, Anie(?) Simpson.

The first Cemetery Hill church was probably built during the later part of 1886 or early 1887, on land donated by William Huskey. This land being on the west side of the present-day Cemetery Ridge Road. A copy of the Constitution and By-laws and some early minutes of the church house are in the possession of the Furneaux Cemetery Association. These records reveal a list of contributors and the amount pledged toward building a church house "to be paid before the 1st day of November, 1886". The Constitution and By-laws are too lengthy to print in its entirety, but the following is a portion of this document:
"Whereas the citizens of this community resident in the southeast corner of Denton County, Texas, and the adjacent portion of Dallas County -

hereinafter more definitely described having built a Union Church House to be used for moral and religious purposes only in accordance with the spirit and teaching of the Bible - on a plot of land donated by Mr. William Huskey for aforesaid use and purpose and for and in consideration do hereby publish and declare the following Constitution and By-laws for the government of the same.

Article I. The building shall be called Cemetery Hill Church House." Another article of these by-laws specifically state that the building was to be used by any Christian demonination or body of Christians wishing to organize a church. These By-laws and Constitution were acted upon at a meeting held March 6, 1887, verifying the building date of late 1886 or early 1887.⁵

Twice in its history the Cemetery Hill Church suffered damage or distruction. An entry in the minutes evidences the first disaster by recording a list of contributors and amounts pledged, at a meeting held June 23, 1895. Those minutes read in part:

"We the undersigned agree to pay the amount opposite our name for the purpose of taking down and reconstructing in a most substantial manner the Cemetery Hill Church House, which was blown down in the recent storm. The said amounts to be paid on or before the 15th of October, 1895."

The second distruction came in April, 1924 when the building was destroyed by a cyclone, and was never rebuilt. However, the last few years of its existence services were not held regularly. The church was used primarily in those last years for funeral services and special programs. The Cemetery Association acquired the land.

Some time after the church had moved to Cemetery Hill, L. H. Foster became pastor. He was succeeded by B. S. Gay and the following named pastors succeeded him, in order named, but the length of pastorate is not known. R. B. Morgan, W. E. Deer, T. B. Pittman, J. H. Bennett, R. B. Morgan, J. F. Black, and D. B. Allen. During the ministry of D. B. Allen the church moved to a new site located on the west side of the railroad tracts in the town of Hebron and the name was changed to "Hebron Baptist Church".⁶ To this writer's knowledge there are no church records or minutes available of any of the transactions that transpired while at this location. Also no pictures of the church are available, but those who remember the church recall it as being a white frame building with a steeple and the front door located in the corner of the building rather than in the middle. Bro. Allen continued to serve until 1914, when he was succeeded by J. L. Ratliff, who served until 1920. It was during the ministry of J. L. Ratliff that the greatest building program in the history of the church was undertaken.⁷

Much credit for the launching of this building program can be given to Mrs. J. T. McCormick, or "Aunt Nannie" as she was more affectionately known, who had been a faithful member of the church from its very beginning. As the story goes, it was in 1915 that "Aunt Nannie" led out in a gin office prayer meeting that led to the giving of the land by Mr. Bob Everett.⁸ Thus with the help of God and through the faith of this

great lady and the people of the community, the present two-story brick building was built. The actual construction of the building was started in 1918, completed and paid in full within two years. Those serving on the building program committee were: Bednigo Isom, Harry Lord, Frank Reynolds and Albert Harpool. Even before the building was completed, utilization had begun when Will McMurry and Ada Simmons were married on boards placed across the floor joists for them to stand on. The building was dedicated in 1920 with Dr. Wallace Bassett preaching the dedicatory message.⁹ The church that year was the third largest in the Denton County Association with a membership of 262.¹⁰

The following is a list of the Pastors who have served in the present church building and their years of service.

<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Year</u>
A. C. Gettys	1920-21	Milton Ferguson	1952-54
S. R. McClung	1922-23	Ralph Aday	1954-55
R. B. Morgan	1924-26	Jimmy Mahoney	1955-56
C. N. Hedges	1927-28	N. R. Barr	1956-57
Bob Ray	1929	Eugene Prevo	1957-61
George R. Wilson	1930-31	F. P. Force	1961-63
M. M. Barnett	1932	W. L. Bowman	1963-65
J. W. Read	1933-35	Arlie Fielding	1965
J. O. Young	1935-36	Kent Berry	1966-67
W. P. Cure	1937-38	Shafter Dixon	1967-71
W. W. Lynes	1939	Wilburn Hall	1971-76
Leon M. Hill	1940-41	Buck Clark	1977-78
J. Henry Haygood	1942	Ray Hand (Int.)	1978-79
W. A. Lindsey	1943-46	W. L. Bowman (Int.)	1979
Joe Carl Johnson	1947	Steve Fowler	1979-82
W. E. Nations	1948-51	Bob Craig	1982-

Although the Sunday School has always, for the most part, been an active part of the training in the church, there are no records to determine who the first superintendents were. Records show that G. P. McMurry was elected as superintendent in 1905 and served until 1919. The following is a list of those who have served and their years of service.¹¹

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>
A. L. Harpool	1919	H. R. Lord, Jr.	1941-42
G. F. Isom	1920-23	Loyd Curd	1943-45
F. D. Holt	1924-25	Will McMurry	1946
G. F. Isom	1926-28	R. T. Davis	1947-51
C. S. Meador	1929-30	J. L. Milligan	1952-55
Roy McCormick	1931-32	Edward Dean	1956-59
J. B. Davis	1933	Joe Grimes	1969-66
W. R. McMurry	1934	J. T. Sewell	1967
C. S. Meador	1935-41	Joe Grimes	1968-79
		John Vinson	1979-82

We would not forget the faithful deacons who have served this church through the years. Jim Miller, Ben Davis, G. P. McMurry J. T. (Bud) McCormick and Henry Skiles were the first known deacons of the church. (There were, in all likelihood, other deacons of the earlier church, but their names were not available.) Others that have been added through the years are:

Albert Harpool	John Tucker
John Skiles	Loyd Curd
Charlie Harpool	Harry Lord, Jr.
Claud James	Keith Barnett
Will Lott	Frank Grimes
D. C. Meador	Harley Uland
D. D. Meador	G. I. Crider
Will McMurry	Wesley Kendrick
Bednigo Isom	Paschal McClary
M. F. Reynolds	Edward Dean
G. F. Isom	J. T. Sewell
C. S. Meador	Robert McBrayer
Will Harper	S. L. Mahan
Roy McCormick	Joe Grimes
Robert McCormick	Donald Dooley

There are no records to indicate exactly when a Training Union was organized, however the church records do mention the church having an active B.Y.P.U. A complete list of Training Union directors is not available, but the following is a list of those believed to have served:

G. F. Isom	Mrs. J. H. Haygood
Mrs. Ada McMurry	Mrs. H. R. Lord, Jr.
W. R. McMurry	James Nations
Fred Holt	Wesley Kendrick
Delos Meador	Bill Robbins
Miss Della Mae Howard	Mrs. Melrose
Mrs. C. S. Meador	Mrs. N. R. Barr
Ray Martin	Bob Milligan
Mrs. Fred Everett	Mrs. Eugene Prevo
Miss Laura Belle Everett	Walter Jernigan

The Brotherhood of the church, although very active at times, has not been too actively supported by the men of the church for any length of time. There are no records of any earlier year organizational dates, but records do indicate that several times a Brotherhood had been organized and was active for a while. Only the names of those who have served as Presidents for the most recent years are available. They are: J. L. Milligan, Charles Mitchell, Joe Grimes, Mike Jones.

The W.M.U. of the church was first organized in 1906 by "Aunt Nannie" McCormick, who served the organization as President for many years.¹² Complete records of the W.M.U. are not available, but those that are indicate that the organization was very active until 1961. An attempt was made in 1968 to re-organize, but due to lack of interest, only lasted a short while. It wasn't until 1971 that the W.M.U. was again

organized and has been active since that time. A list of presidents is incomplete, but a few who have served in this capacity are:

Mrs. Will Lott	Mrs. J. W. Tucker
Mrs. Tom Harpool	Mrs. H. R. Lord, Jr.
Mrs. W. R. McMurry	Mrs. Paschal McClary
Mrs. J. B. Davis	Mrs. G. I. Crider
Mrs. Fred Everett	Mrs. B. Isom
Mrs. W. P. Cure	Mrs. Harley Uland
Mrs. Barney Simmons	Mrs. Dan Brinegar
Mrs. B. C. Stubbs	Mrs. Joe Grimes

Much has been accomplished over the years through the W.M.U. One of these being the Community House building, that was once a two-room schoolhouse. After the consolidation of the Hebron School District with the Lewisville School District, the building was purchased by the women of the church in 1951 for a total sum of \$1.00.¹³ In 1955 the building was moved to its present site, next to the church building. Through the combined efforts of the church, the Brotherhood, and contributions from the people of the community, many of whom were not affiliated with this church, the building has been restored and is in constant use by the church and community. The building is constantly being updated as evidenced by the nice kitchen facilities, the addition of bathrooms in 1968, by the planting of shrubbery by the Hebron Bicentennial Committee, and the installation of a heating and air conditioning system.

Another part of the church which I feel must be included as a part of its history is the church parsonage. Even though "Aunt Nannie" McCormick had moved from the Hebron community, her love for the church and its interest had not deminished; so on April 26, 1945, she deeded to the church her house and lot located on the main street in Hebron, west of the church. A few years later the parsonage being in much need of repair, the church voted to remodel it. So with the skilful carpentry of W. A. Kelley and Paschal McClary, the top story was removed and the bottom part remodeled. In March, 1965, the church purchased a new building to replace the old one. The old parsonage was torn down and the present building was moved in and remodeled; this time under the carpentry skill of Robert Jernigan.

The Hebron Baptist Church has always been mission minded, having as its motto "A Village Church With A World Vision". In 1953 under the leadership of the Young Couples Class the church gave the largest offering for foreign mission work in its history; approximately \$560.00. In more recent years the Acteens have been very active in church work, making large contributions to the mission field. An example of the fruits of their labor, under the leadership of Mrs. Margie Grimes and Mrs. Wanda Hall, resulted in a contribution of \$205.28 to the Lottie Moon mission in 1973. These amounts have been surpassed in the last few years with contributions to mission work of well over \$500.00 to \$800.00.

Much can be said about the wonderful group of Christian workers who have gone out from the church in years past. One of the greatest of these is Lillie Hundley who served as a missionary in China for many years. Other missionaries in the foreign field have been Lee Childress, Henry Haygood, and Joe Carl Johnson. Bro. Haygood and Bro. Johnson had served as pastors of the church before entering the foreign ministry. Mrs. Haygood and Mrs. Johnson served with their husbands while on the foreign field.

Another feature of the church work has been that of the music. Hymns express praise and devotion to God and the singing of hymns has always been a distinctive feature of the church. Sincere appreciation is expressed to those who have faithfully contributed to this part of the service throughout the years. One of those faithful ones is R. T. Davis who lead the church in its singing from 1933 to 1981. Today the music is under the direction of John Vinson.

The church has been a member of the Denton County Baptist Association since 1887, having joined at the second annual meeting, and has continued to support the association through attendance and a monthly contribution to help carry on the associational work. In 1909, 1916, 1921 and 1938, the church served as host to the annual associational meeting. It has never been a member of any other association.¹⁴

The associational minutes since 1920 list the following executive board members from Hebron Church:

C. Harpool	J. T. Sewell
Frank Solomon	Jerry Milligan
M. F. Reynolds	John Vinson
J. W. Tucker	Wilburn Hall
G. I. Crider	Donald Dooley
Joe Grimes	Mrs. Joe Grimes
Theodore Davis	Mrs. Sandra Morris

The church through the years has served as a training field for young ministers while continuing their education. Many calling Hebron Baptist Church their first pastorate; some going on to pastor other churches; some entering other fields of ministry. One former pastor, Bro. Milton Ferguson, receiving his doctorate degree at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, became one of its Professors and taught there several years. Dr. Ferguson is now president of Midwestern Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. The feelings of the young ministers throughout the years was very well expressed in the Church Bulletin of June 21, 1935 when Bro. James M. Read, the pastor at that time, wrote these words, "We again and again are made happy when we realize that we are kept in school and permitted to receive our education because of the interest of this community in God's messengers".

Although the church records show only three ministers ordained, Bobby J. Milligan, 1961, Buck Clark, 1976, Tom Whitton, 1981, and four licensed, Bobby J. Milligan, Ray Cannedy, Wendall Wall, and Mike Grady, it can feel with pardonable pride that it has contributed much toward the Gospel Ministry.

Another quote from the book of J. N. Rayzor, speaks of the church in these words: "The Hebron Church has ever been a great church and should continue as such because of its historical name. The Hebron Church has ever enjoyed the reputation of being loyal to the denomination and all its activities - it is among the best small-town churches".¹⁵

Although the membership of the church has deminished over the years, the current membership (resident 86, non-resident 62) still has that same faith and loyalty her ancestors had back in 1883 when it all began. This is evidenced as you enter its sanctuary and view the beautiful stained glass windows, which were installed at the time the church was built and reveals the names of several of the pioneer families. From the outside the windows are unimpressive, but when viewed from the inside, with the sun shining through, they are a thing of beauty. Most of the windows have paintings of Biblical scenes, each one telling a story - the story of the life of Jesus Christ. Further viewing will disclose the love and many hours of labor that have gone into the refurbishing of the auditorium. Most of this work has been done by the men of the church. In 1962 plywood was put on the walls, the ceiling lowered and new light fixtures installed. In 1964 new drapes were installed across the Baptistry. In 1967 a library was added; 1968 new carpet; 1971 central heat and air conditioning; 1972 pre-finished paneling was added to the walls and new cushioned pews were installed. The names of the donors of these pews can be read on a plaque on the back of each pew. In 1982 choir chairs were added.

In 1979 the church voted to incorporate. The state approved the application and the church received its Charter dated September 8, 1980 under the name of First Baptist Church, Hebron.

And so today, First Baptist Church, Hebron, which can be seen for several miles away, stands as a loving tribute to the hundreds of loyal dedicated Christians that have been a part of her glorious history - continuing to send forth the Gospel Light to all those who seek the high calling of Christ Jesus.....PREACHING CHRIST AS HE IS TO MEN AS THEY ARE.....

TWENTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY

CEMETERY HILL

UNION SUNDAY-SCHOOL,

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1896.

AT

EVERETT'S ~*~ GROVE,

DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS.

PRINTED AT THE COURIER OFFICE, PLANO, TEX

(Program furnished by Mona Morgan)

Non-Profit



The State of Texas

SECRETARY OF STATE

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION OF

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, HEBRON
CHARTER NO. 531483

The undersigned, as Secretary of State of the State of Texas, hereby certifies that Articles of Incorporation for the above corporation duly signed and verified pursuant to the provisions of the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, have been received in this office and are found to conform to law.

ACCORDINGLY the undersigned, as such Secretary of State, and by virtue of the authority vested in him by law, hereby issues this Certificate of Incorporation and attaches hereto a copy of the Articles of Incorporation.

Dated SEPT. 8 1980


Secretary of State



jpp

FOOTNOTES

1. James Newton Rayzor, History of the Denton County Baptist Association, 1936, page 42.
2. Ibid., pages 128, 130, 132, 136.
3. Ibid., page 42.
4. Ibid., page 42.
5. Minutes, Furneaux Cemetery Association, (custody of Mrs. Mildred Huffhines, Secretary).
6. Deed Records, Denton County, Texas, Volumn 160, page 480.
7. "An Inheritance", history of the church, 1960, page 3, (unpublished).
8. Ibid., page 6.
9. Ibid., page 3.
10. James Newton Rayzor, History of the Denton County Baptist Association, 1936, page 212.
11. Denton County Baptist Associational Minutes, 1920-1982.
12. James Newton Rayzor, History of the Denton County Baptist Association, 1936, page 43.
13. Minutes, Lewisville Independent School District, 2-7-51.
14. James Newton Rayzor, History of the Denton County Baptist Association, 1936, pages 126, 178, 200, 214.
15. Ibid., page 43.

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