

# " History of The First Baptist Church"

of Eminence, Indiana

1840-1940

Mt. Eden - The First Baptist Church

This document was compiled originally in 1940 by the Church Clerk which was Anna Marshall. It is now being copied to be placed in a Time Capsule for Eminence on this 18th day of September in the year of 1988.

" Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."

Psalms 90:1.

" God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of troubles therefore we will not fear."

Psalms 46:1-2

" The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Psalms 23:1

For a century those words have been a blessed reality and with that promise in mind and a burning desire in the hearts of those servants of God and according to previous arrangements, on October 24th, 1840, the Brethern met at the home of Brother Joseph Donaldson, in order to be constituted into a church. Calling upon Samaria and Friendship Baptist Churches, Elder J. Skelton, P.A. Foxworthy, William Craven, Beeson Baker, and Josiah Buchanan, of Little Mount and other brothers being present. Calling Bro. Arnold to be moderator and J.S. Buchanan as clerk, and after examining into the situation of the brethern, we found them fit to constitute a church. Bro. Joseph Donaldson, Bro. Wm. Bowman, Bro. Joseph Mosier, Sister Elizabeth Donaldson, Sister Isabela Mosier, Sister Catherine Fidler, Sister Eliza Fidler, and Sister Mary Cunningham. After agreement of the terms of Union and after selecting the " Articles of Faith" of the White Lick Association they agreed



to constitute themselves into a regular Baptist Church. They gave each other the right hand of fellowship and agreed to be known by the name " Mount Eden". Thus these five sisters and three brothers were the foundation of our organization of a century and their stout hearts and clear minds gave us a heritage of which we are proud. These people met at the homes of Bros. Thomas Shumaker and Joseph Donaldson because of the large size of their houses for the purpose of worship and at every meeting a great outpouring of God's love and blessing were manifested and souls were born again. They soon found that a church building was needed, and in a business meeting of July 1841, they decided to build a log house as soon as possible.

Bro. Thomas Shumaker deeded the ground for a church, a cemetary, and a school. This was located on a part of his farm. The cemetary still in use is located a short distance east of town. Later, they discussed the advisibility of a frame house but at last decided on another log house. This was located on the South East of corner of the Northwest quarter of Section 33, Township 13, North, Range 2 West entered by Elizah Bourn from the government in 1832 and later conveyed to Jacob Surber, on March 1843. Jacob Surber deeded the above plot to the trustees of the Church via Joseph Donaldson, Thomas Shumaker, and Joseph Applegate. The lot on which the present church stands and to be used for church purposes only. The first building was a very large room 30 x 40 feet, located North and South, the door in the south end, three windows on the east and west sides and two windows in the north. The interior was very plain, the pulpit was very large and tall, being built in the center of the north end. In fact, it was so tall that three steps were required to get up into it and the speaker could scarcely be seen.

The room was lighted with candles, a row on either side and a row of stands containing candle holders thru the center.



Meetings were commenced at early candle lighting. The room was heated by very large fireplaces and the seats were without backs. This church was the first one to organized in this section of the country, in fact 13 years before the town was plotted. From 1840 to 1850, the growth of the church was great and another larger log church was built in 1860. The White Lick Association was entertained here for the first time. Other years that the Association has met with us are 1868, 1880, 1888, and 1903. In 1866, the log church was torn down and a frame building was erected. The total up to 1870, was 315 and there were additions at every meeting. In 1890, the membership had reached 500. That year the golden anniversary was celebrated. Fifty years of service of to God was then the heritage of a few who are sons and daughters and grandchildren of these early pioneers who thru cold and heat and sunshine and shadow put Christ first in their lives, and left a blessed trust to those who carried on. The church building in 1890 was remodeled to its present form, but circumstances made it impossible to dedicate it at that time. On October 12, 1895, the only time in the history of the church an " Old Folks Meeting" was held and elderly people came for miles to attend this service, which was in charge of that Saint of God, Rev. J. E. Sherrill. Now these many years gone to his glorious reward. In 1898, dedication services were planned but death interfered and these plans were not carried out until July 28, 29, and 30 of 1899. Dark days came and from October 27, 1906 until July 10, 1910, there was no regular services. Then a slight revival by very small membership and services were continued until April 1911. Although our faith never failed, yet no record of service until April 1914. In all those years from that time until 1931 , we were a very small band of believers striving for existance, trying to live bright home



lives, Sheep without a Shepherd.

On October 5, 1931, God blessed us in a wonderful way when he sent two of his servants to us. Rev. Harvey S. Burns and Rev. W.E. Houghten, previously to their coming a few of the members of the church assisted by some friends of the church made the building presentable and comfortable for worship. Rev. Burns and Rev. Houghton labored with us for several days and the visible results were, a church revived again. Twenty added and peace and goodwill prevailed. At the close of these services, the church was reorganized with the following officers. Moderator: Bro. Alfred Shumaker, Clerk: Sister Anna Marshall, and Treasurer: Bro. Harold Gregson. On Sunday morning, October 18, 1931, Sunday school was reorganized and later a B.Y.P.U. and the Women's Fidelity Class. Rev. Burns was given a unanimous call to serve the church as pastor and begun his work in November of that year. On November 28, 1931, the name of the church was changed from " Mount Eden" to " First Baptist Church". In the last nine years, pastors others than Rev. Burns were Rev. W.P. Milne, Rev. Homer Cate, Rev. B.D. Locke, and the present pastor, Rev. T.G. McAlister. Some others who have served the church as pastors are : Rev. Elliott, the first pastor in 1840. Rev.s Arnold, Ben Mugg, John Mugg, Crews, Buchanan, Rynerson, G.W. Sherrill, Fuson, A.C. Edward, L.T. Bray, J. Alspaugh, G.W. Terry, P.N. Harvey, A. Mayhall, Tom Sherrill, Hume, J.E. Sherrill, Raleigh Smith, J. Tederick, Ray Banks, S. Hayworth, R. Cline, J. Holmes, R. Mastin, J. Tincher, J. Cox, G. Miller, and some others whose names are not known.

The present membership is 90. The oldest member living is Mrs. Emma Smith and the youngest one is Miss Ruth Eva Phillips. Only two marriage services have been read in this church in 100 years. The first one in January 1845,

bridal party unknown. The second in January 1935, bridal party was White and Kersey. Service read by Rev. Burns, a beautiful service.

Thus 100 years have passed and in God's mercy and goodness we are permitted to see this glorious ending of a century of service for God and his Church.

And as we go down the highway of life, starting on the second century , we in fancy can hear the church bell calling us to worship, " And no stately edifice, or steeple tall can reach any higher or give a clearer call, than the modest church and the old church bell, that for long, long years has called so clear, so well".

From the " Little Old Church by the Side of the Road"

Written by Anna Marshall, August of 1940- Church Clerk