

EARLY CHURCHES IN THE ABA

Arkansas Churches

Liberty Baptist Church (Grant County, AR)



Sometime in the early 1830's, a group of migrants left Anson Co., NC in a wagon train under the leadership of Warren Holliman. They temporarily settled in Fayette Co., AL. Then about 1840, the migrants continued to what became known as the Old Belfast community, seven miles north of Sheridan. On the journey from Fayette Co., AL, they were accompanied by John Walters, an ordained Baptist preacher. Warren Holliman had married Millie Walters, sister of John Walters, in Anson Co., NC in 1825.

There is good evidence that services were being held in the Lost Creek meeting house in this community as early as 1841. The history furnished by the Palestine Church states that Liberty Church was organized in 1841. Another source stated that services began as early as 1841 at the Lost Creek Meeting House in the community. The church was later moved and the name changed to Liberty*. However, it was 1853 before the church officially petitioned the Saline Association. There was a New Hope Church in the same area that petitioned the Saline Association in 1843. Warren Holliman was listed as a messenger. John Walters was pastor of Fairview Church in 1859-1860.

The messengers to the Saline Association in 1853 were W. J. Poe, J. W. Poe, and Jacob Watson. Sam Dauthat was pastor of the 38 member church.

The Palestine history states, "The old Liberty minutes list several members of Palestine that formally belonged there and were granted letters to unite with Palestine. It is almost a certainty that Palestine was organized as an arm of Liberty or New Friendship Church, since they were the closest churches to the Palestine community. Sweet Home Church, as we know was also an arm of the Liberty Church."

The deed for the original location was drawn by W. T. Poe, and his wife, M. R., in donating five acres of land to the Liberty Church and School. The five deacons of Liberty were the trustees. The deed was not recorded until March 9, 1889. Pastors were Rufus M. Lindsey, 1881-1885; Joshua Halbert, 1887-89; Joshua Halbert, 1890-93; H. P. Haley, 1894; A. L. Brumbelow, 1895; H. P. Haley, 1896; Joshua Halbert, 1897; A. L. Brumbelow, 1898; William Tucker, 1899-1906; W. B. McCool, 1907; and William Tucker, 1908.

Because of population shifts from the rural area, the membership and attendance decreased, and the church disbanded in 1946.

* Mrs. Wm. Hobert (Bertha) Byrd, *Forest History Interview, May, 10, 1979, unpublished manuscript, Grant County Museum.*

Kentucky Missionary Baptist Church *Oldest ABA Church in Arkansas*



The Lindsey, Fletcher, Spencer and Davis families lived in near proximity in Christian County, KY. These families, who had begun to intermarry, migrated to Lawrence County, Arkansas about 1815. In addition to being closely related by kin and marriage, most of the group were Baptists. Caleb Lindsey appears to have been the leader of the multi-family group.

However, the first official record of Caleb Lindsey's affiliation with an Arkansas church was in 1823, when he was listed as a messenger from the Little Flock Church. Richard Brazil, who was previously listed as a messenger of the Salem Church, was a messenger from Union Church, Saline, Co. to the organizational meeting of the Saline Association.

John Young Lindsey, a son of Caleb and Sarah Lindsey, moved with his family and others from Kentucky to Northeast Arkansas, and then to Saline Co. He was named after his grandfather, John Young, Sarah Lindsey's father, who was one of the first

preachers imprisoned in Caroline Co., VA in 1771 for preaching the Gospel without a license.^[1] Thus it is remarkable that one of Arkansas' pioneer preachers came from a family that had first hand experience with religious persecution in the State of Virginia.

About 1824-25 twelve families left Lawrence Co. and traveled the "Southwest Trail" to the Benton, AR area. At that point they abandoned the trail and moved westward, crossed the Saline River, and cut a road through the woods. They eventually settled about seven miles west of Benton, near the Saline River, and founded a community called "Lindsey Settlement," near the present location of the Kentucky Church and cemetery.

Although the official records of the organization have been lost, informants have confirmed the original members were from the Lindsey, Fletcher, Spenser and Davis families. Thus, the Kentucky Baptist Church was the first church organized within the present bounds of Saline Co. Several descendants from these charter members still live in the area.

The actual date of the church organization is uncertain. One account gave an 1822 date.^[2] However, according to family records the 1824-1825 dates are more accurate. Another history of the church gave the date as 1832.^[3] The first official record of the church was in the 1828 Minutes of the Little Rock Association of Regular Baptists. The messengers were not listed.^[4] Nevertheless, Kentucky is the oldest continuous Baptist Church in Arkansas.

By 1832 the congregation had reached sufficient numbers to prompt John Y. Lindsey to construct a building for the church. This original log building was south of the cemetery site, and also south of Highway 5 and the present church building.

Little Rock Association of Regular Baptists

The further history of Kentucky Church will be better understood by introducing Elder Silas Toncray "Silas Toncray" and his ministry in Central Arkansas. Eld. Toncray may have assisted in the organization of the Kentucky Church. It is also believed he served as first pastor of the church, until he moved to Memphis about 1830.

Toncray, who came to Little Rock from Kentucky in July, 1824, was a Baptist preacher by profession, and a silversmith and jeweler by trade. He announced a meeting in the July 16 *Arkansas Gazette* to be held the fourth Sunday of July "to constitute a regular church of Jesus Christ..."^[5] This meeting was held July 24 at the home of Major Isaac Watkins, Eld. Toncray's brother-in-law. Isaac Watkins and his wife, Maria Toncray, had come to Little Rock perhaps as early as 1822.

In November, 1824, Eld. Silas Toncray led in the formation of the Little Rock Association of Regular Baptists, the first association established in the state. The association was formed with messengers from the Little Rock Church with ten members, Salem Church in Clark Co. with twelve members, and Arkansas Church (Pecannerie) in Conway Co., with three members, for a total membership of 25. The Kentucky Baptist Church was a member by 1828.

Eld. Toncray was Moderator for the 1824 and 1825 sessions, and Isaac Watkins served as Clerk. According to the doctrinal statement adopted, the group believed in the Covenant of Redemption, Limited Atonement, Effectual Calling, but also Freedom of the Will. They also expressed belief in "close" communion.

The 1825 meeting was held with Salem Church in Clark Co., Nov. 5-7. This church was located on the Alum Fork of Saline River, about six miles NW of Owensville, on the Sulphur Springs Road, in what is now western Saline Co. Five churches were in the association by this time:

Little Rock Church, Salem Church, Little Flock, Clark Co., Arkansas Church (Pecannerie), Conway Co., Little Flock, Crawford Co., The preachers in the association were Silas T. Toncray, Charles Brandon, Josiah Smalley and Silas Dodd.^[6]

The 12-member Little Rock Church erected the first church building in Little Rock in 1825. The building, located on the south side of Third Street, between Main and Scott streets, was used by all denominations. It was also used for some committees, and possibly the State Legislature, after Arkansas became a state.

Eight churches were participating in the Association by 1828: Little Rock, Salem, Kentucky, Saline, Little Flock, and Copperas Creek in Perry Co, with a total of 88 members.^[7]

Another church represented in the Little Rock Association in 1828 was Saline Church. This church was also represented in the organization of the Saline Association in 1836. Based on available information, some of the original settlers accompanying the group that established the Kentucky Church desired to settle on the south side of the Saline River, and continue as part of the Kentucky Church. However, the frequent flooding of the Saline River made this impractical. Therefore, these people organized a separate church by 1828. Later the church was moved about 1.5 miles south, and now continues as the Mt. View Missionary Baptist Church.

In 1830 Toncray was called to Memphis by the death of his brother and did not return to Little Rock. After Eld. Toncray left the area, the faithful group at Lindsey Settlement continued weekly meetings for fellowship and Bible study.

The Little Rock Baptist Church was also without a pastor after Toncray left. In May of 1832, Benjamin F. Hall, another Kentucky preacher, moved to Little Rock. Hall, a disciple of the "reform" movement of Alexander Campbell, promptly set about to take over and convert the Little Rock Church.

He held a revival meeting in the Baptist meetinghouse. J. S. Rogers reported, "Most of the members were captivated and captured by him." As a result, on July 4, 1832, a majority of the members met "for the purpose of renouncing their creed, rules of decorum, their name and every other appendage of human invention, taking only Jesus as their King and Lawgiver." The *Arkansas Gazette* writer continued, "Following this drastic change, they adopted resolutions proclaiming themselves as 'Christians' and their church as the 'Christian Church.'"^[8]

Kentucky History Continued

Among the membership of this "reformed Baptist Church" was Judge Charles Caldwell and family. Judge Caldwell moved his family to the Lindsey settlement on the Saline River and opened a large mill. In 1833 the post office was moved to his home and renamed Caldwellton.^[9] As new residents of the community, Judge Caldwell and his family became associated with the Kentucky Baptist Church.

Through Caldwell's efforts, William W. Stevenson, who had become pastor of the Little Rock Christian Church, "came among them" and began an effort to convert the people of Kentucky Church to the reformation movement. Writing in 1838, Stevenson reported, "The brethren on the Saline are left without a preacher. They petitioned [my] church for aid." Stevenson attempted to show there was but "the shadow of a shade's difference" between his teachings and the views held by the Baptists.^[10]

Stevenson apparently preached at Kentucky for several years; however, his efforts met with little success, and the church remained staunch in its Baptist convictions.

Sometime after 1834 a Baptist minister visited the Kentucky Church. Several converts were baptized and John Y. Lindsey was ordained as a deacon. Under the Baptist preaching, the effect of the "reformation movement" was diminished. Finally, John Y. Lindsey was licensed as a Baptist preacher in 1841 and was ordained in 1845 by the Spring Creek Baptist Church.^[1]

The Kentucky Church was received into the Saline Association in 1843, with a membership of 15. Eld. Lindsey continued as pastor until his death in 1866.

Eld. John Y. Lindsey became one of the most widely known and respected Baptist pastors in central Arkansas. He participated in the organization of DeRoche Church, near Bismark (October, 1847). From this church, the oldest current member of the Saline Association, many other churches were organized. Eld. Lindsey organized the Marble Church in 1848 and pastored the church until May, 1854. He also pastored Fairplay Church from 1855 until 1860. He was moderator of the Saline Missionary Baptist Association from 1855 until the sessions were discontinued by the effects of the Civil War in 1862.

The Civil War took its toll on the Lindsey family, as well as most families in the South. Their estate was raided several times, and most of their possessions were plundered. Eld. Lindsey died in September of 1866 and was buried in Kentucky Cemetery.^[ii]

In 1956 the State Association erected a bronze historical marker in front of the Kentucky Church, which is located on Highway 5, seven miles west of Benton.

Saline Missionary Baptist Church now known as Mt. View Missionary Baptist Church



The first record of the church was representation in the Little Rock Association in 1828. Saline Baptist Church was one of the six churches originally comprising the Saline Association in 1836. The messengers from Saline to the organizational meeting were Allen Samuels and J. T. Terry. The church reported a membership of 19.

We have no definite information concerning the organization of this church, but it is commonly believed some of the families first forming the Kentucky community desired to settle south of the Saline River. Because of the difficulty of crossing the river at certain times, this church was organized about one mile south of the river.

This first official information we have on the church was its representing in the Little Rock Association of Regular Baptists in 1828. This is also the first official note of the Kentucky Baptist Church. Unfortunately, we have only the names of the churches, but no names of the messengers, pastors, etc.

Saline Church represented in the 1848 session of the Saline Association at Brownsville Church, Tulip, Dallas Co. The church represented in the Association regularly for the first few years, and then only occasionally.

Based on information given by informants, Virginia Newcomb, who was born in 1909, and also R. C. Newcomb, Jr., born in 1921, the church and a school were originally located about halfway between the present Mt. View Church and the Saline River. Some time during the 1920's the church and school were moved to a building about 1/4 mile east of the present Mt. View Church. The church met upstairs and the school met on the ground floor. The church and school were both referred to as Saline and Mt. View, until Mt. View was officially adopted as the name in 1936. Both informants identified the original and later locations of the school and church. The two-story school-church building was destroyed by a tornado in 1926, and the church was then located at the present site.

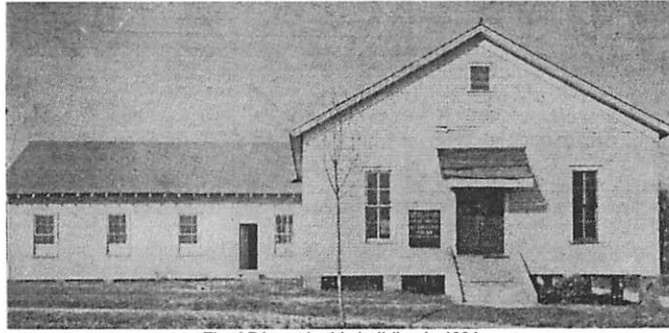
Virginia Newcomb was born north of the river about 2.5 miles west of the Kentucky Church. Her parents, James Arthur Newcomb and Rosa Lee Dodson Newcomb, were members of the Kentucky Church. She remembered crossing the river to attend revival services both at Saline and at Kentucky.

In the early 1920's, W. H. Andrew was Pastor of First Baptist in Benton. He was also called as pastor of Mt. View in 1923. He probably preached at Mt. View, and also at Kentucky Church on Sunday afternoons. No doubt, it was his influence that led the Mt. View Church to leave the Saline Association. The church actually voted to represent in both associations in 1923.

According to church minutes, Saline Church sent messengers to the Central Association (SBC) from 1925 until 1951. On Sep. 14, 1952, Mt. View voted to change affiliation to the Pine Bluff Association (ABA). This was primarily through the influence of R. C. Newcomb, Sr., who contacted Eld. Raymond Fitzgerald to serve as pastor and help the church again fellowship with the A. B. A.

On Sep. 8, 1968, Mt. View voted to join the Central Association (ABA) of Missionary Baptist Churches.

Spring Creek Baptist Church Mother Church of the Saline Baptist Association



The ABA met in this building in 1934

The Saline Association, the oldest continuous association in Arkansas, originally used the name "United" in its official name. It was the unique combination of the Regular and Separate Baptists which led to the United Baptists in Kentucky, which today are known as Missionary Baptists.

Spring Creek Church, Benton, the mother church of the Saline Association, was organized on April 2, 1836 at the home of David Dodd. Eld. Samuel Henderson, who had come to Saline County in 1834, preached the message. In addition to serving as Spring Creek's first pastor, Eld. Henderson was pastor of Union Church from 1834-1840, and also organized North Fork Church in 1837, and served as pastor until 1841.

At the May meeting held to ordain Bro. Henderson, probably the first ordination in the state, Deacon Moses Bland suggested the beginning of the Saline Association: "Deacon Bland moved the utility of our Association at this place. The Church Council all harmoniously agreed to meet on Saturday before the first Lord's Day in October next for the purpose of Constituting of an Association."

In response to that invitation, the Saline Association was organized at **Spring Creek Church** near Benton, in Saline Co. on Oct. 1, 1836. The Association was organized with four churches, the Mt. Bethel Church, 7 miles SW of Arkadelphia, and the Mt. Gilead Church, [then Hot Spring Co.] Montgomery Co. and the Saline Church, now Mt. View, 4 miles west of Benton. Eld Samuel Henderson was chosen moderator, and Michael Bozeman, from Mt. Bethel Church, was elected as clerk.

The total membership of these churches was 73.^[11]

Therefore, much of the early church history in central Arkansas revolves around the Spring Creek Missionary Baptist Church in Benton.

For about two years the church met at the home of Bro. David Dodd. Bro. W. Carl Brown, for many years clerk of the Association, stated the location as being about a mile east of Benton, and about forty yards north of the old Military road. He wrote, "The destruction of the large oak was caused by camp fires being built about its roots. Spring Creek worshipped in a small board house near by, but a few years later built a small frame house near the old Lee Cemetery, in which county courts were also held for about two years."^[12]

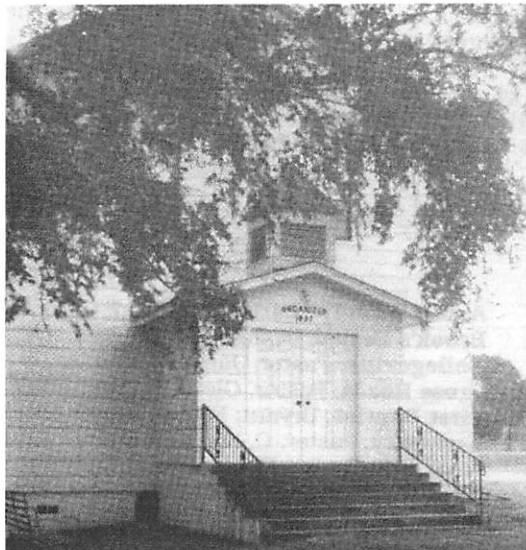
The church obtained property and the first building was built by April of 1838. Sometime after the Civil War, the church moved to the location of the present First Baptist Church. In September, 1878, the church changed its name from Spring Creek to First Baptist, since it was the first Baptist church in Benton. The church continued to represent in the Pine Bluff Missionary Baptist Association up to and including the annual meeting in 1917.

In 1915, a large number, but less than half the membership, voted against following Convention principles and methods. Outvoted, and unwilling to make the change, the group withdrew from the majority, took its original name, Spring Creek, and built a church on Edison Avenue in East Benton. Apparently the Benton Church was somewhat supportive of the move, they dismissed Sunday Evening services to assist in the organization.

At the 1914 meeting of the Pine Bluff Association both First Baptist and Spring Creek were represented. Therefore, both churches were represented in the Pine Bluff Association through the 1917 session. At the 1917 meeting Benton Church [First Baptist] was listed with 255 members and Spring Creek with 139 members.

The introduction of the "75-Million Campaign" in 1919, a precursor to the Cooperative Program of 1925, prompted many Landmark Churches and Associations to sever all ties with the State Convention. In 1968 Spring Creek withdrew from the Pine Bluff Association to lead in the organization of the Central Association of Missionary Baptist Churches, which includes a majority of the Missionary Baptist Churches in Saline County.

North Fork Missionary Baptist Church
Paron



According to **Goodspeed's History**, the North Fork Church was organized in 1837 by Eld. Samuel Henderson, the first pastor of Spring Creek Church and the first Moderator of the Saline Association. He was also pastoring Union Church at the same time.

The Minutes of the Saline Association in 1843, 1848, 1852, and 1853 make no reference to North Fork Church. The first reference is in the 1854 Minute: "Appointed Ministers and Deacons' Meetings, to wit:

First District to be held with North Fork Church, Saline Co., to meet on Friday before the second Lord's Day in Sept., 1855."

However, North Fork was not shown in the 1854 Table of Statistics. North Fork Church is first listed in the Saline Assoc. in 1855 and actually entertained the Association in 1856. John Y. Lindsey was Moderator.

Around 1880 the North Fork congregation moved from its location just south of North Fork Creek and east of Hwy. 9, on the north edge of Paron, to its present location at 12th Street at Hwy. 9 in Paron.

According to **Goodspeed's History**, the membership of Hall Flat Baptist Church, located about three miles south of Paron, joined with the membership of North Fork in building the present building. A. B. and Margaret C. Holland donated One acre of land to the church. The deed was recorded April 23, 1892.

In 1951 the descendants of the families who had built the original church/lodge building began discussing rebuilding it. A building and finance committee were appointed. The building was completely reworked at a cost of about \$3,900. In 1955 four Sunday School rooms were added, and four more rooms were added in 1971. In 1986 the auditorium was remodeled at a cost of \$6,505.

In 1932 North Fork Church was received into the Pine Bluff Association by petitionary letter. However, in 1947 through 1954 the church participated in the Central Association (SBC). In 1955 North Fork elected messengers to the American Baptist Association and the Saline Association.

On March 17, 1968, the church voted to accept the Articles of Agreement and join the newly formed Central Association of Missionary Baptist Churches.

Egypt Missionary Baptist Church Ashley County

Egypt Missionary Baptist Church, located in Longview Township, Ashley Co., eight (8) miles NW of Hamburg, is the oldest current member of the Bartholomew Association.

Early records of the organization were lost and not much is known for sure. The corner stone of the present building, which was first placed in a previous building, stated the church was established in 1842. There were several early settlers who worked to establish churches in this area of the state beginning about 1845. Among these were Elders Y. R. Royal, Benaiah Carroll and Uriah Parker. It is supposed one of these men assisted in the organization of Egypt Church.

Egypt Church was in existence, but was not a charter member of the Bartholomew Association when it was organized in 1850. However, the Association met with Egypt Church in 1857. **Goodspeed's History**, (written in the 1880's) interviewed people in the area while writing the history of Ashley Co. These informants stated Egypt Church was in existence before Beech Creek Church (1849).

The earliest records in existence date from February, 1904. These records indicate that church conferences were held on Saturday before the fourth Sunday in each month.

In the minutes of Nov. 28, 1943, it was mentioned that each lady was asked to give a hen to raise money for paint for inside of the church house. \$12.32 was raised from the sale of the hens.

The first mention of moving the old church building was in 1946. In October, 1949, the church voted to establish a building fund to build a new church building. Apparently the building was completed by 1959, and discussion was opened concerning an appropriate cornerstone. Finally on April 4, 1968, the church voted on information on the cornerstone, which was placed in front of the church.

Jamestown Missionary Baptist Church South of Batesville



The Jamestown MBC was actually organized in Jefferson Co., TN in 1842 [iii] After the organization, the members traveled to Arkansas by ox cart. The churches in Jefferson Co., TN had a direct link to the Sandy Creek Association of Separate Baptists in Gulliford Co., NC. Therefore, the migration of what was known at the time as the Cedar Grove Baptist Church, furnishes a rather direct link to the Separate Baptists, and also the Baptists that came from North Carolina through the Cumberland Gap into eastern Tennessee.[13]

In an article appearing in the August 1, 1928, issue of the **Baptist and Commoner**, Elder J. L. Brown, who wrote a regular column dealing with church history, gave a report on the history of the Jamestown Church. Since Bro. Brown was a contemporary, actually pastoring the Jamestown Church as early as 1878, and actually knew five of the charter members of the church, his testimony should be credible.

Elder Brown began the report on the Jamestown Church with the following paragraph:

"Via Eld. W. M. Owen, Via Eld. Ben M. Bogard has fallen into my hands an old leather-bound book. This book was first the property of Jamestown Baptist Church (Cedar Grove), but later fell into the hands of the Denmark Baptist Church (known as Independence Church). The book does not tell us how it came to change hands and as the change took place about eighty-one years ago [1847], six years before I was born, I'm not going to tell you, but will content myself by giving you some points of information, followed by a few personal reminiscent notes."

"The Cedar Grove Baptist Church, now known as Jamestown Baptist Church, seven miles southwest of Batesville, in Independence County, Arkansas, was organized in the state of Tennessee on the first Saturday in September of 1842.

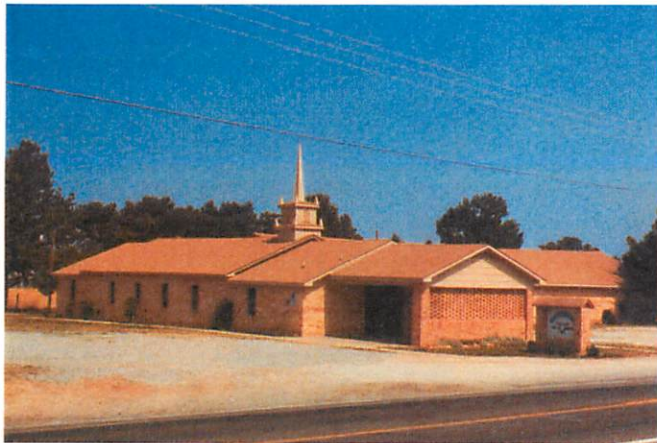
The church was organized with sixteen members. After the organization the church moved "enmasse" to Arkansas and settled in Greenbrier Valley in Independence County. The valley takes the name from Greenbrier Creek that empties into the White River above Batesville.

Bro. Brown continued, "In 1877, just thirty-five years after its organization, that church [Jamestown] elected me to serve as pastor. I have served as its pastor first and last, twenty years, and **was personally acquainted with five of her charter members.**" [iv]

The records of the Jamestown Church do not include the details of the organization. The first meeting recorded was Saturday before the first Sunday in January, 1849. Bro. G. W. Kennard was pastor, and Bro. Henry Bayless was clerk.

The records indicate that on May 5, 1850 a presbytery was called consisting of Elders John Goad and P.S.G. Watson and deacons Henry Bayless and Thomas Hankins to ordain H. H. McCoullin as a deacon.

Independence Missionary Baptist Church Denmark



A group of emigrants planning to locate in Independence Co., AR was organized into a church in Jefferson Co., TN in September, 1842 with sixteen charter members.

In August of 1928, **The Baptist and Commoner** published two significant articles written by Bro. J. L. Brown. In the August 1 article concerning the Jamestown Church, Eld. J. L. Brown stated, "After the organization the church moved in enmasse to Arkansas and settled in Greenbrier Valley in Independence County." Bro. Brown was of the opinion that the 16 members organized in Tennessee actually constituted what was first known as Cedar Grove Church.

It has been suggested that possibly the sixteen members from Tennessee settled in a common location, and that as they selected farm lands and began life in the area, some of the immigrants eventually located in Jackson Co. and formed the Independence Church about twenty miles from the Jamestown Church.

So, indeed, the group that assembled in their own meetinghouse on Saturday, August 6, 1846 apparently moved from the original place of settlement in Independence Co.

Bro. Brown continued, "In 1877, just thirty-five years after its organization, that church [Jamestown] elected me to serve as pastor. I have served as its pastor first and last, twenty years, and was personally acquainted with five of her charter members."

In the August 8 issue Bro. Brown wrote about Independence Church, under the caption, "The Church at Denmark." He stated, "About 1846 Elder John Goad moved from Kentucky and settled at Denmark. Some of the Hankins and Pates and Lovells from Tennessee, also settled in that section."

He further stated, "Although holding their regular meetings they never organized and declared themselves a church until Jan. 28, 1847." [v]

The session to which Bro. Brown refers is actually the first entry into the records after the statement about the Tennessee organization in 1842. That entry reads as follows:

"United Baptist Church of Jesus Christ met in church conference and Bro. Gordan Hankins clerk. Resolved that Bro. N. Eaton act as moderator. Resolved that this church be called Independence. Being in fellowship and in order for business a dore (sic.) was opened for the reception of members...

Then follows [out of date sequence] the two paragraphs previously cited. They begin, "Independence Church met according to appointment at their meeting house on Saturday, August 8, 1846..."

Then Bro. Brown continued, "So we read that they met in their meeting house on the 8th day of Aug., 1846, at which time they appointed Bro. Willis Hankins to procure a church book.

The following notes were taken from the church minutes:

In May, 1857, the business of moving the meetinghouse was taken up, and on motion the church agreed to move their meetinghouse near Elder John Goad's residence.

In August, 1857, the Trustees were appointed to take a deed from Elder John Goad of the land upon which the meetinghouse is to be built.

As was the case with many churches, services were disrupted by the Civil War. The minutes read, "Then it was moved and seconded that the church at Independence disorganized for the want of fellowship and the church book placed in the hand of Bro. Thomas R. Mason till called for by legal authority." The last meeting was May, 1863. There is no record of meetings until August, 1866.

After the Civil War was over, the church was re-organized on Saturday, August 4, 1866. The record stated, "We the under named persons agree to be constituted in church capacity upon the articles of faith of the Old Baptist Church at Independence, White County, Arkansas."

In the re-organization none of the original members were participants. However, most of the members in the reorganization had previously been members of the church.

After the church was reorganized on Saturday, Aug. 4, 1866, John and Elizabeth Goad rejoined on Sunday, August 5, 1866.

Elder John Goad and Elizabeth left Kentucky late in 1845 and arrived in White County, Arkansas on Feb. 3, 1846, becoming the first settlers at Denmark. According to Bro. Baker, the Independence Church called him as pastor in 1850. He continued as pastor until 1863 when the church voted to discontinue services.

Writing in the *Arkansas Baptist*, June 12, 1901, Dr. Ben M. Bogard stated, "Searcy Baptist Church was organized June 1850 under the name of Shiloh Baptist Church of Christ by Eld. John Goad." Eld. Goad also served as pastor of the church in 1850-51. This is now the First Baptist Church, the church that Dr. Ben M. Bogard pastored in 1899-1901 when he became involved in the Landmark struggle against the Convention.

Philadelphia Missionary Baptist Church^[14] Southeast of Prattville



This church, organized in 1842, is the oldest member church of the Pine Bluff Baptist Association. Tradition maintains that the new church, named Philadelphia or Brotherly Love, was organized in a log schoolhouse on the west side of Polk Creek about three-quarters of a mile from its present location.^[15] The exact names and number of the charter members are not known, but when the church petitioned the Saline Baptist Association for membership in September of 1842, she had approximately 56 members.^[16]

The area around the new church was a vast, unbroken wilderness of forests and streams. Yet its fertile, virgin land held promise of a future in cotton if one could but wrest it from the rich soil. It was the lure of this wealth that brought the Keezee-Hicks family from Alabama into this area as early as 1837. James A. Hicks and his wife, Elizabeth Keezee Hicks joined Spring Creek Church in December, 1837; George, Isaac N., Nancy and Milly Keezee joined in June of the next year.^[17] They were soon joined by more settlers including James' father, Francis Hicks,^[18] and John Hesson.

Hesson, a licensed Baptist preacher, originally from North Carolina,^[19] joined Spring Creek Church and later asked for ordination to the ministry. However, because of the church's "limited acquaintance" with him, the motion was withdrawn, resulting in Hesson's requesting and receiving a letter of dismissal.^[20]

However this setback was only temporary. Hesson found a field of labor preaching in his rapidly growing community, which was now being called Lost Creek.^[21] His efforts were soon complemented by the labors of another licensed preacher, John Y. Lindsey, from Kentucky Church north of Benton, who preached in this neighborhood as early as 1842.^[22] They were assisted by Aaron Bolt, pastor of Spring Church, who had been given by his church "liberty to receive and baptize members in destitute neighborhoods."^[23]

Among the early arrivals during this time, who were to be active in the history of Philadelphia Church, were Frances Posey, who arrived from Louisiana in 1841, and William E. Beavers, whose family came from Mississippi in 1842.^[24] However, the greatest influx into the area was by a number of Baptist families from Bibb and Tuscaloosa Counties, Ala., who were friends and relatives of earlier Grant Co. settlers. Among these families were the Cobbs, Jollys, Lowes, Mayfields, Pumphreys and McDaniels.^[25] By the year 1842, the settlement had developed enough to begin shipping cotton to Pine Bluff.^[26]

The man who seems to have been the main mover behind the organization of Philadelphia Church, and its first pastor, was Elder Joab B. Pratt, who had been the pastor of many of the families above named, in Alabama. He and his brother, John, came to this neighborhood in the fall of 1841. Joab had been born in North Carolina in 1798, but at an early age had settled in Bledsoe Co., Tenn. In 1820 he moved to Bibb County, Ala. and became a member of Enon Baptist Church near Mapleville, which had been organized in 1818.^[27] He was ordained to the ministry by this church on May 12, 1827, Isaac Little and John E. Summers forming the Presbytery.^[28] He pastored widely in Bibb and the neighboring county of Tuscaloosa with much success.^[29] No doubt he was one of the moving forces behind the emigration of so many of the Alabama families to Arkansas. The venerable Arkansas Baptist pioneer, Isaac C. Perkins, wrote, late in 1841, "we feel encouraged by hearing of our beloved brother Pratt and others, coming into different sections of the state."^[30]

The Minutes of the Saline Association for 1843 reflect the prosperous condition of Philadelphia Church. Joab Pratt was the pastor; G. G. Cobb was the clerk. They, together with Berryman McDaniel, represented the Church at the Association. They reported 18 additions by baptism and 16 by letter, while two had died and five had been dismissed by letter, making a total membership of 83.^[31]

Sometime during this early period, the place of meeting was moved to the Church's present location, and a meetinghouse constructed. "The old house was made of logs," wrote J. J. Beavers in 1897, "in the rear of the pulpit three or four logs had been taken out, making a window extending almost the entire length of the building. Just by this window, outside of the Church house, a platform was made and covered, which was used by the Negroes. By this means the preacher could be heard by both the whites and negroes."^[32]

Elder Pratt established a post office for the community in his home on Feb. 20, 1846, and named it Lost Creek. It was a few miles to the east and south of the church. Later William E. Beavers and his son, Henry H. Beavers, served as postmasters. In 1859 the name was changed to Turin, a name the community retained until this century.^[33] The Beavers family had become members of the church about 1845.^[34] William E. served as County Judge of Saline Co. from 1852 until 1854. Of his six sons, five fought with great valor in the Confederate Army. Henry H. became a Baptist preacher, and B. B. served as Secretary of State for Arkansas from 1874 to 1879.^[35]

In October, 1847, Philadelphia Church dismissed her members living on the west side of Saline River for the purpose of forming a new church.^[36] She sent Eld. Joab Pratt, John Hesson, Eli Saffull and Deacon John Pratt to help in the organization of Brushy Creek Baptist Church near Leola.^[37]

In 1847 Elder Pratt was elected Moderator of the Saline Association, and began to devote much of his time to evangelical and missionary endeavors, traveling as far as Hempstead and Union Counties.^[38] About 1849 he moved to Union County, where he continued pastoring until his death, which occurred on October 1, 1867.^[39]

In September of 1861 Philadelphia Church became an organizational member of the new Pine Bluff Association. She hosted the Association in October of 1862, 1865, and 1868.^[40] After the dark days of the Civil War, the church continued to grow. In 1867 she reported 29 additions and in April, 1874, she ordained Joshua Halbert to the ministry.^[41]

Early Available Information

The early minutes of the Philadelphia Church are no longer in the possession of the church. In October of 1949, Bro. R. W. Glover prepared a short history of the church. At that time he had access to the records. By combining those records with information from associational records, the following information is available:

Before the group from Alabama arrived under Eld. Pratt's leadership, Eld. John Hesson held services in the area as early as 1840. Eld. Hesson was a member of Spring Creek Church in Benton as early as 1837. Eld. Hesson was holding services at a log schoolhouse on the west side of Polk Creek, 3/4 mile west of the present site of Philadelphia Church.

Soon after the Alabama group arrived in 1842, the Philadelphia Church was organized. Eld. Joab Pratt had led in the organization of six churches in Alabama. Apparently Eld. Hesson and those he had been preaching to joined with the Alabama group in forming the church. The first official statistics listed 56 members when the church petitioned the Saline Association in the fall of 1842. Eld. Joab Pratt was listed as pastor.

Information on the first building and church activities was furnished by J. J. Beavers,^[42] who was clerk in 1883-1885:

"I was born within two miles of this church as located then and now. The old house was made of logs. In the rear of the pulpit three or four logs had been taken out, making a window extending almost the entire length of the building.

"Just by this window, outside of the church house, a platform was made and covered, which was used by the Negroes. By this means the preacher could be heard by both whites and Negroes.

"The old log house has given place to a neat, substantial frame building, painted within and without. It is located among as good people as live on the earth. There is everliving water close by [Polk Creek] and from my childhood up to the last few years I have seen the redeemed follow Christ in baptism within a few yards of the church."

Delegates to the 1861 Pine Bluff Association: Eld. R. J. Coleman, W. A. Wilson and L. Collins. The church requested a letter of dismission from the Saline Association for the purpose of joining the Pine Bluff Association. There were 19 additions to the church during this associational year. Eld. R. J. Coleman Pastor and Henry Halbert, Clerk

Bro. LeRoy Polk did research based on the minutes of the Pine Bluff Association.

He wrote: "Philadelphia Church was first in the Saline Association. Philadelphia Church was host to the Saline Association in 1849 and 1855.

"Philadelphia Church was not in the organizational meeting of the Pine Bluff Association which met in Pine Bluff, June 7-8, 1861. They came into the Pine Bluff Association from the Saline Association, along with Big Creek, Liberty and Fairview Churches.

"In the 1861 minute Elder R. J. Coleman was listed as Pastor. He was also listed as pastor of Providence, Red Bluff and Shiloh. The address of the church was listed as Turin in Saline County, six miles northeast of Jenkin's Ferry.

"Eld. R. J. Coleman was elected moderator of the Pine Bluff Baptist Association in 1861 and also 1862. In the 1862 minute he was still listed as messenger of Philadelphia Church, but pastor of Liberty and Red Bluff.

The church membership was listed at 102, the largest in the Pine Bluff Association, with Big Creek (Sheridan) next with 74.

The interior of the building was done in 1964 and air-conditioning was installed in 1966. Four classrooms and rest rooms were added in 1969. The building was bricked in 1977, and carpeting was installed in 1978. A building for extra classrooms and a fellowship hall was erected in 1982. A baptistery, and new heating and air-conditioning system were installed in 1985. An addition was made to the Fellowship Building in 1987.

Salem Missionary Baptist Church Boydsville

The Salem Missionary Baptist Church, organized in 1842, is located one mile south of Boydsville, Arkansas. The church was organized by Eld. Sherrod Winningham, a missionary of the Black River Association in MO, and Eld. William Nutt. Salem MBC is the oldest church in Clay Co.

Eld. Sherrod Winningham was ordained by Cherokee Bay MBC. This church first represented in the Black River Assoc. in MO. The four churches that formed the Bethlehem Assoc. had also fellowshipped in the Black River Association.

According to Horton Bartlett^[43] the Salem Church was organized in 1843 by Elder William Nutt, who was buried in the Bethlehem Cemetery in 1845. According to R. C. Medaris^[44] Elder William Nutt first made a missionary tour of Crowley's Ridge, north of Wittsburg in 1838. He was the first Baptist preacher in the area and moved there in 1839 and remained until his death in 1845. "He preached all over the Ridge portion of the Mt. Zion Association and organized churches. He was a good preacher and untiring in his efforts, and of strong faith."

Later in the same publication, R. C. Medaris stated (p. 18) that Elder William Nutt, a native of Tennessee, walked all the way from Shelby Co., TN to preach the Gospel to the people of Arkansas. He wrote, "He labored seven or more years in Northeast Arkansas as a faithful minister of the Gospel of Christ. During his years of service he organized the following churches: Mt. Zion, Macedonia, Cross Roads, Walnut Camp and Bethel. Bro. Nutt walked to and from all his appointments..."

"He died in 1845 and his body sleeps in the old burying ground at Knob, Clay Co., Ark."

In 1853 Salem Church sent a call to several sister churches to send messengers for the purpose of organizing an association. In October, messengers from Salem, New Hope, Bethlehem and Mt. Gilead met at **Salem Church** and formed an Association originally known as The Bethlehem United Effort Baptist Association. These churches had been affiliating with the Black River Assoc. in SE Missouri.

A frame building was erected in the late 1860's or early 1870's using square nails. It was remodeled several times.

On March 24, 1974 Salem Church voted to build a new church building. The first service was held in the building on Sep. 15, 1974.

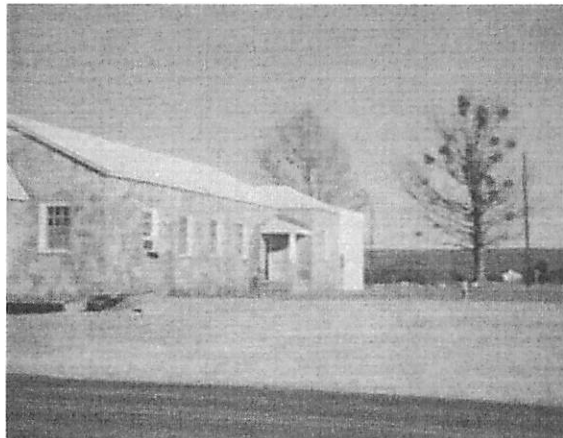
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church Zion

According to the best information available, Antioch Church was organized on Sep. 1, 1844. Bro. Henry McElmurry came to Arkansas and settled on Piney Fork, near the Hamm Post Office. The church was organized in the home of Andrew J. McElmurry, who was a son of Henry McElmurry.

Eld. David Orr was moderator and Eld. William B. Kerr was clerk. There were fourteen charter members. Eld. Henry McElmurry was the first pastor, and remained as a member until his death in 1853.

The church is currently a member of the Spring River Association.

Flatwoods Missionary Baptist Church Mountain View



Flatwoods Missionary Baptist Church was organized about 1846 in the community of Riggsville, about two miles SE of Mountain View. Details the organization are not available. However, in the church record of 1885, Sisters Mary Hinkle and Mary Sutterfield stated the Church was established not later than 1846.

On April 23, 1881, Ruben Whitfield deeded property to the trustees of the church. This property was located on what is known as the "graveyard hill" in the Flatwoods Community, for the purpose of a school, cemetery, and church. More land was deeded

in later years. A committee was appointed to draw up plans for a church building before the property was deeded. These plans were approved March, 1881.

The building was erected on this site, and the church moved from Riggsville. In about 1906 another building was built. During 1933 the building was moved to its present location without dismembering it, by using rollers and mules.

The Flatwoods School was annexed to the Mountain View School system in 1945, leaving the land for church and cemetery purposes.

The church started a drive in 1949 to build a new building. The old building was torn down. The construction was started in September, 1950, and the building was completed and a Dedication Service was held on the Fourth Sunday in May. The Church worshiped with Whitewater Baptist Church during the time of construction. Eld. Herby Branscum was half-time pastor of both churches.

Flatwoods and seven other churches organized the Blue Mountain Association in 1874. The first Sunday School was organized on May 4, 1882, but it met irregularly until about 1940. The church had services one Sunday per month until half-time services were initiated about 1940. The parsonage was built in 1955, and was enlarged and bricked in 1981.

Brush Creek Missionary Baptist Church

Leola

The Brush Creek MBC, the second oldest church in the Saline Association, was organized in Nov., 1847 by the Philadelphia MBC. The first members were actually those members of Philadelphia Church who were living west of the Saline River. One source stated, "In October, 1847, Philadelphia Church dismissed her members living on the West side of Saline River for the purpose of forming a new church... On the First Sunday in November, 1847, they met at the school building at Sulphur Springs and organized Brush Creek Baptist Church,..."

The presbytery was composed of Elders Joab Pratt, John Hesson and Eli Saffel and deacon John Pratt from the Philadelphia Church and Eld. Cornelius Cain from Hot Spring Co. The Abstract of Faith of the Saline Association was adopted, because the Philadelphia Church was in the Saline Association until the Pine Bluff Association was organized in 1861.

The first business meeting was held in March, 1848, with Bro. John Y. Lindsey acting as moderator. They agreed to meet the following Sunday and ordain Brethren Jesse Cotton and Davidson Cunningham as deacons. Other early deacons were E. B. Deer, Andrew Stiles, Albert S. Rhodes, John Wiley, W. R. Toler, John Rankin, Felix Brashears, Mack Gifford, James Cunningham and W. S. Gifford.

In June of 1848 Bro. S. T. Cobb was chosen to serve as pastor until December, 1849. Other pastors were Elders Eli Safful, R. M. Thrasher, Joseph Maley, A. Yates, John Clem, R. M. Lindsey and Sidney F. Funk.

A building committee [Brethren Cunningham, Cox, and West] was appointed in Sep., 1849 and made its report in October. According to the 1936 minute, the church was organized about one mile from where it is now located. Brush Creek is the only church in Grant Co. that is a member of the Saline Assoc.

As was typical of churches of the time, the early records list charges against many of the members for various sins, including drunkenness, stealing a hog, stealing corn out of a crib, etc.

DeRoche Missionary Baptist Church

Bismark



The DeRoche MBC was organized Oct. 3, 1847, at the school house near Squire Obediah Burnett's home on the Murfreesborough Road. A presbytery was made up of Elders Cornelius Cain and John Y. Lindsey. Eleven persons agreed to the constitution and principles of the Mt. Moriah Association. Upon presentation of letters of dismission, they were declared a Baptist Church. In early years the church was referred to as a United Baptist Church of Christ. In 1877 the name was changed to Regular Baptist Church. In January, 1897, the name was changed to DeRoche MBC.

The following churches were organized out of DeRoche: Bismark MBC, Hickory Grove MBC, Caney MBC, and Midway MBC.

The DeRoche Church has affiliated with several Associations during its 146 years. When the Red River Association was organized by dividing the Saline Association in 1848, the churches west of the Ouachita River, which included DeRoche, became the Red River Assoc. In 1856 the church petitioned the Caddo Assoc., then in 1869 the church affiliated with the Saline Assoc. DeRoche is presently the oldest church in the Association.

In 1896 messengers were sent to the Baptist State Convention. In 1903 the church pledged support to the State General [Landmark] Association.

In July 1903, P. Montgomery presented a deed to the church for a new building site, about five miles south of the original building. The church met in the new building for the first time in September of 1903. The present structure was built in 1943.

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church Rison

Based on available information, the New Hope MBC was a charter member and remains the oldest church in the Friendship Association. It is believed the original New Hope MBC was established about the year 1847, about 1.25 miles NE of the present location. Elders James Osborne and James Overton may have been the first pastors.

Early families in the church were Kimbrell, Lunsford, Overton, Osborne, Hunter, Tucker, Ryburn, Davis, Harvills, and Rawls. Many descendants of these families are still members of New Hope.

The location of the original New Hope church building was located by what is now known as the Jewel Cemetery.

According to New Hope's records, Zion Church was formed in January, 1861, by a two-member presbytery: Eld. James Osborne and deacon J. Tucker, both associated with New Hope. It is reasonable to assume that other members from New Hope were instrumental in the formation of Zion MBC because of the distance and difficulties of attending services at New Hope. New Hope also assisted in the establishment of Oak Grove MBC.

In 1881 the original church building was abandoned and a new church was built 1.25 miles SE of the original site adjacent to the present New Hope Cemetery. In 1885 Bro. Ben Ryburn donated five acres of land for a church and cemetery. The present location is on Hwy. 114, approximately 3.75 miles west of Calmer.

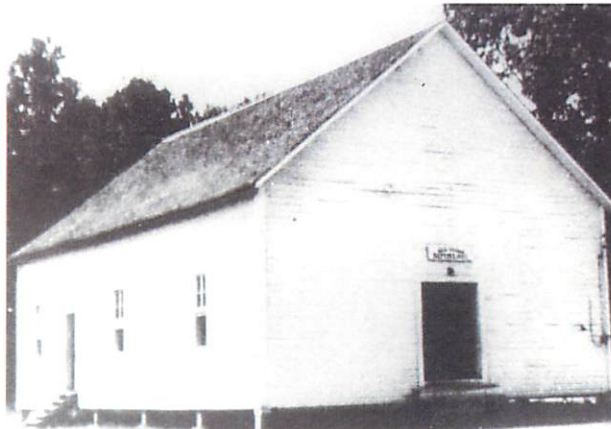
From 1890 until 1950 the church remained essentially unchanged with few additions and modifications. The church building was constructed of wide boards nailed vertically with large square nails. The interior was essentially unfinished with exposed studs on which lanterns were hung for light during evening services.

Members born in the late 1930's indicate that New Hope may have ceased to hold services at times, and some say the church met with Zion at times for services. In 1941 Bro. John S. Bowlin's home was destroyed by fire. He was church clerk, and all the church records were also destroyed in the fire.

In 1949 the old building built in 1881 was torn down and replaced by a new building. This building continues to be utilized as an educational building and fellowship hall. It is believed the church also met with Zion during this period.

During the 1950's several additions were made to the church, including lengthening the auditorium. In 1971 construction was completed on a new auditorium, which was dedicated in 1973.

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church Southwest of Sheridan



In the summer of 1848, Elder Miles Milford Wallace, a dedicated, traveling Baptist missionary, spent several days preaching in what is now Calvert Township and other nearby settlements. "Many families," he wrote, "have not the Word of God in their homes,

(nor have they) heard a Baptist preacher...while others declared they never had witnessed the immersion of a believer in water before." "This country is thinly inhabited and (has) but few churches, small and poor," he continued, "and money is scarce. Worst of all, in many places, I have had to contend with formidable opposition from the anti-mission Baptists..."^[45]

In his report of the results of these meetings, Elder Wallace reported, "I assisted in the constitution of two Baptist Churches, one in Saline County and one in Jefferson County..."^[46]

Miles Milford Wallace

Miles Milford Wallace was born February 6, 1810 in South Carolina. He became a Baptist in 1830 and was ordained in the Gospel ministry in 1832. By 1836 he was pastoring two churches in Greenville Co., South Carolina. Learning of the great destitution of Gospel preaching in the "great and extended valley west of the Mississippi", he later wrote, "I gathered up my Bible, my family, and my all and bent my course westward with all possible speed".

In 1848 Elder Wallace set out on one of his extensive missionary trips. During this sixty-three day trip, he traveled 1,035 miles, preached thirty-six sermons, visited six churches, collected \$211.50 for missions, and organized three new churches--which included Spring Hill and Shiloh.

He reported, "The country I passed through is thinly inhabited [with] but few churches, small and poor, and money is scarce." "Worse of all," he continued, "I have had to contend with formidable opposition from anti-mission Baptists... Many [of the] families [I have met] have not the word of God in their homes [nor have they] heard a Baptist preacher before in their life; have never witnessed the immersion of a believer in water before...I have frequently stood on the earth as a pulpit, while the open sky was my sounding-board, and preached...in the open air...to thousands...with good effect."

Organization, June 25, 1848

In his preaching in Calvert Township, Elder Wallace had located three families who desired to be organized into a Baptist Church. This he did on Sunday, June 25, 1848. Aiding him in this endeavor were Elder Joab Pratt,^[47] pastor of Philadelphia Church and Elder Aaron Bolt, pastor of Spring Creek Church in Benton.^[48]

Those who joined together that day as a New Testament church were Thomas Belzora and F. [Nancy] Findley, James G. and Charity Penson, and Elder Jesse and Elizabeth Reaves. For a name they chose Shiloh, which the church has retained to the present. At various times from then until 1857 Elder Reaves served as pastor.

Elder Wallace reported, "I assisted in the constitution of two Baptist Churches, one in Saline [Shiloh] and one in Jefferson County, Arkansas [old Spring Hill Church once located south of the Grapevine Community] --both convenient to an excellent Baptist Minister...Jesse Reaves who has promised to preach to them monthly...In many [such] neighborhoods a sermon has not been heard for many years...and [there are] some settlements where a sermon has never been preached". "All [of] these things," Elder Wallace wrote, "make me willing to undergo the fatigues, privations, and sufferings of a missionary life."

Of the three families whose members came together to begin, as they often said at that time, "to keep house for the Lord," more is known about the family of Jesse and Elizabeth Reaves. Jesse was born about 1798 in Georgia. By 1832 he was living in Wilcox Co., Alabama when he was ordained as a minister of the Gospel by the Friendship Baptist Church. He pastored that church, and also the Boiling Spring Church.^[49]

About 1848 he and his son-in-law, Gillford Glover came to the area and settled near Cross Roads. He pastored several churches in Grant and surrounding counties, including Philadelphia Church from 1850 until 1852. He was Shiloh's first pastor and evidently served until about 1857. He seems to have retired from active pastoral work about 1860; however, he was in attendance at the 1862 session of the newly formed Pine Bluff Association.

Although records are scanty, there is evidence the church may have been inactive during the period after 1856, the last year the church was represented in the Saline Association. When the Pine Bluff Association was constituted in the fall of 1861, Shiloh Church joined the Association as a "new" church with eighteen members. Shiloh has continued this associational fellowship since that date.

In 1861 Eld. R. J. Coleman, the moderator of the Association, served as her pastor, and Thomas A. Morris was the church clerk. The church had 18 members.

According to his autobiography Elder Coleman was pastor of Shiloh for four years. We can assume this was from 1858 until 1862. Elder Coleman stated he settled in the Pine Bluff area in 1858 "and did a great work in that section." He "preached once a month at Pine Bluff and putting my time at other destitute places; one Sunday in Saline Co. [now Grant] with a dilapidated church called Shiloh, in the vicinity of Eld. Jesse Reaves; continued preaching there four years. It was twenty-five miles for me, and I realized about \$30 per year."

Move to Present Location

Apparently Shiloh Baptist Church and New Hope Methodist Church shared a log-meeting house for several years at the Old Shiloh Cemetery, just west of Cross Roads. As was customary in most early settlements, the Methodists held services certain Sundays and the Baptists certain others on a rotational basis.

This continued until 1885 when Shiloh Church moved about 2.5 miles southwest from that location to the present site. At that time Windfield S. Traylor and his wife, Nancy, donated two acres of land to the church. A building was soon constructed at the new location. That building stood until the present building was constructed and dedicated in 1953. Soon after the relocation of the church, four families who had previously worshipped at the present site of the Bethel Cemetery, about one mile west, joined with the members of Shiloh.


By 1889 in recognition of the same shift of population to the southern part of the township, which led to the relocation of Shiloh Church, a new post office called Erin was established near the present location of the church.

Immediately after the close of the revival meeting in August, 1952, the church building that was originally built about 1885 was torn down. Erection of the new building was begun. At the close of the revival meeting in August, 1953, the commodious church building with Sunday school rooms, and new pews was completed and paid for. The new church building was dedicated on September 20, 1953.

Later the church building was bricked, and Sunday School rooms were added. Several years later two more class rooms were added, and church furniture was placed in the auditorium. The church also built a fellowship hall.

During the 1980's stained glass windows and a baptistery were installed, new carpet was purchased, and the inside of the Fellowship Hall was finished.

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 <http://www.abaptist.org/abaha/churches/bethel1.jpg>

 <http://www.abaptist.org/abaha/churches/bethel2.jpg>

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church Glenwood

Bethel MBC, Glenwood, the oldest Baptist Church in Pike Co., and one of the oldest Missionary Baptist Churches in western Arkansas, was organized August 5, 1848, about two miles SE of its present location.

Charter members were William F., Mary L., and Mary C. Browning, Jesse Cunningham, William Tucker, Frances Maynard, and Nancy Foshee. The church was originally named Caddo Valley, and then later Pleasant Grove, before the name Bethel was adopted in 1861.

William F. Browning was born in Thomas Co., GA in 1802. He moved to Clark Co. AR in 1841, and settled near Mt. Bethel Church, about 7 miles SW of Arkadelphia. On Christmas Day, 1847, Mt. Bethel Church granted letters of dismission to the Brownings. During that winter they moved to Calbeth Township, Pike Co., and built a large double-log house on the Mt. Ida Road, north of the Caddo River.

It was at the Browning home that Bethel Church was constituted. He had invited two Baptist preachers to lead in the organization. They were William Hardage, pastor of DeRoche Church, Hot Springs Co., and William L. Anderson of Mt. Bethel Church.

The fledgling village of Amity was saddened by the death of its founder, William F. Browning, on July 26, 1854. Eld. William Spatas, his pastor at that time, chaired an associational committee which wrote a suitable tribute.

For twelve years the church worshipped at a site near the Browning Farm. After holding services temporarily at a "store house" at the Bohannon Spring near the home of Mrs. Robert Baker, the church moved to a "new school house" located near the present site.

During the Civil War, Bethel Church maintained preaching and prayer services on a fairly consistent basis. This was due to the faithfulness of the church members and the tireless labors of Bethel's pastor, Thomas F. Welch. "Parson" Welch was too old to take active part in the War. At the conclusion of the War he may have been the only active Baptist preacher in the area. It is reported his preaching tours took him as far as Mt. Ida, Nashville, Alpine, and DeRoche, as well as Bethel Church. As a result, Bethel was the largest and most active Baptist Church in northern Clark, southern Montgomery, eastern Hot Springs and all of Pike counties.

By the summer of 1867, Bethel dismissed ten members to organize the Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church. Bethel also led in reorganizing the Caddo River Baptist Association, beginning in 1866. However, the 1868 session, at which the Mt. Pisgah Church was received, was the first true associational meeting following the War's disruptions.

By 1869 both the church and the school had outgrown the building. The building was enlarged by an addition to the south side. This log building continued to be used until 1885, when the church voted to build a church house specifically for the church. The new building was built on the present site of the church. A picture of this building has been preserved and presented to the church. The building was roofed in 1908, and continued to be used by the church until the present building was constructed in 1950.

Bethel Church left the Caddo River Association in 1907 and petitioned the new Pike Co. Association for fellowship. During the period from World War I until the mid 1930's, Bethel Church struggled to maintain church services. Its representation at the Clark-Pike Association was infrequent until the church underwent a period of revival beginning in 1938. A new building was constructed in 1950. Additions were made during the 1960's, and a complete remodeling and expansion was completed during the 1980's. A parsonage was completed during the 1980's.

—adapted from "Camping in Old Colbath: A Short History of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church" 1980, and "A History of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church" 1991, both researched and compiled by Russell P. Baker

Marble Missionary Baptist Church Jessieville

Marble Church was organized Oct. 21, 1848 in NW Saline Co., now Garland Co. The site of the organization was 15 miles west of Paron and 5 miles east of Jessieville, near the Middle Fork of the Saline River.

The presbyters for the organization were Elders John Young Lindsey and Aaron Bolt. Bro. Lindsey was pastor of the Kentucky Church and Bro. Bolt was pastor of Spring Creek.

The following is an excerpt from the organizational proceedings:

To all whom it may concern that Elder Aaron Bolt and John Y. Lindsey, Regular Ministers of the Gospel being a Regular Baptist Presbytery, being called upon by the following brethren and sisters,

Baring letters from different Baptist Churches, some by baptism on examining them find them in order and orthodox and did therefore constitute them into a Regular Baptist Church of Jesus Christ to be in title to all the right and privileges immunity as a sovereign and independent body or Church endowed with the authority to make her own rules or Laws or her own internal

government in conformity to the New Testament as a Separate Regular Baptist Church of Christ by the name of Marble, done the Saturday before the third Sunday in October 1848, and signed by the presbytery.

The exact location of the first building is unknown. It was somewhere near Newkirk Cemetery, about one-mile SW of the present location. It is very likely the church met in private homes, especially the home of Sharp. D. Glenn.

Sharp David Glenn moved to the Marble community May 12, 1836. He and his wife Cynthia (Syntha) were the only charter members to remain at Marble until death.

In 1919 an arsonist burned the meetinghouse. When the new framework was up, it too was burned. The church then bought a one-acre site from Dr. James Rogers. At this time deacons Thomas L. Johnson and I. W. Merriott signed an agreement with a prominent member of the community to build a community church house. This invalid action was done without church authority, but it served its purpose. Many in the community thought for years that Marble Church house was a community house. The church did allow a Church of God preacher to hold services for a while. This resulted in a split in the membership, with several being excluded.

Marble has been affiliated with three local associations, beginning with membership in the Saline Assoc. in 1850. (The 1936-minute listed Marble as representing in 1849 at Philadelphia) She hosted the 1868 meeting, the first after the Civil War for which we have records, with 20 churches represented. (There may have been an 1867 meeting with only seven churches represented, but we have no records of it). Marble hosted the Association again in 1880, with 39 churches represented.

In October, 1862, Marble led in organizing Bethlehem Baptist Church on the headwaters of Little Blakely Creek. Bethlehem is now located on Hwy 298, just west of Hwy. 7, about 17 miles north of Hot Springs. In 1896 Marble organized a church at Jessieville named New Marble. This work soon died, then was revived, and Jessieville Baptist Church, now with the SBC, was constituted.

Until 1949 Marble had preaching one Sunday per month. In 1949 the church became half-time, and in 1958 the church became full-time with preaching every Sunday. Then in June of 1975, Bro. Jimmy D. Johnson was placed on the field and paid a salary. Marble was the first church of any persuasion in this area to do this. Since that time the church has increased to an average Sunday attendance of 95, enlarged the auditorium, added 8 Sunday School rooms, a fellowship hall, central heat and air, restrooms and landscaping.

Francois Missionary Baptist Church Hwy 171, Malvern

Francois MBC was organized in Dec., 1848. The original name was Sardis, but was changed to Francois in 1849. The name also appears in other variations, such as Franceway (1909-1936).

The presbytery was composed of Samuel T. Cobb, William G. Frost, and Davidson Cunningham.

Early pastors were Samuel Cobb, Aaron Boll, Saul Douthitt, John Y. Lindsey, Daniel Hammonds, R. D. Ross, John Clem, Rufus M. Lindsey and R. M. Thrasher.

Francois has worshiped the Lord in four different buildings. The first two were built of logs with punchboard floors and split logs used for benches. The second log building stood until 1904 when a frame building was erected. This one stood until 1953 when a buff tile building was built. In 1976 four classrooms were added. In the spring of 1981 the church was completely renovated and a white brick building bears the Francois Church name.

Antioch Missionary Baptist Church Perryville

It is believed that a revival was preached in the area in 1845, and that in 1849 a Bro. Cheek from Spring Creek at Benton helped organize the church.^[50]

The log building was started in 1859, and was finished after the Civil War. Four prominent men were each responsible for raising a corner of the building. Church and school were held in the building, even before the building was roofed. It is interesting to note the church still worships in the original building. The church is located about four miles SE of Perryville on State Hwy. 300.

Churches in Perry Co. were members of the Saline Assoc. as early as 1869, and the Saline Assoc. met with Bethel # 2, which was nine miles west of Perryville in 1865.

Antioch Church petitioned the Saline Assoc. in 1881. John J. Cook, E. H. Rankin and Joseph Johnson represented the church. Three other Perry Co. churches also came by petitionary letters: Bethel at Alpin, Blue Point at Adona, and Harmony at Long Creek. Eld. J. H. Scruggs was pastor of Antioch, Bethel, and Concord churches.

In 1955 the church underwent extensive repairs and remodeling took place.

Oak Hill Missionary Baptist Church Hot Springs

The Oak Hill MBC is an outgrowth of the South Fork Church. The date of the organization is unknown. However, South Fork was first listed in the Saline Association in 1850. The church represented regularly until 1898. By 1853 the church reported 94 members, with Eld. John Y. Lindsey as pastor. John Y. Lindsey helped organize the Marble Church, about 15 miles to the north, in 1848 and was pastor until 1854. It is commonly believed South Fork came out of the Kentucky Church, and was also organized by John Y. Lindsey.

South Fork hosted the Association in 1858, John Y. Lindsey, Moderator.

Sometime after 1898 the church became inactive. In 1903 the church was reorganized as Oak Hill MBC and the church building was moved about 1.5 miles north to the location of the Hyland Cemetery, the present location of the church, known as the Old Danville Road. The previous location was Hwy. 5 (old Hot Springs-Little Rock road).

The organization was effected by an "Ecclesiastical Council" called of sister churches: Marble Church was represented by Peter H. Smith, an ordained minister; Bethlehem Church by C. B. Mcee, a deacon; Mt. Pleasant by M. S. Jackson, a deacon.

The council convened the Third Lord's Day in August, 1903, by electing Peter H. Smith as Moderator and W. A. Neighbors as Clerk and choosing J. P. Howard and A. S. Wise to assist in the organization.

Eld. W. A. Neighbors donated the property to Oak Hill as long as it remains a church.

W. J. Neighbors was pastor of Oak Hill from 1882-1887, and Marble from 1871-1885. W. A. Neighbors was pastor at Marble in 1912-1913, 1916-1919, and 1920-1921. Steve Ragsdale was pastor of Marble in 1890, 1891, 1896-1897, 1902, 1905.

It is thought the church fellowshipped in the Central Association (SBC) from its organization until 1921 when the Church represented again in the Saline Association.

Another interesting picture was made in 1940 when the men removed the leaking sheet metal roof, soldered the holes by hand, and re-roofed the church. The church erected a new block building in the early 1950's. Extensive remodeling was done on the building in 1992.

The Church sponsored a mission in 1958, resulting in the East Side MBC in Hot Springs.

Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church #1 Malvern

Pleasant Hill MBC was organized Sep. 20, 1851, with fourteen charter members. Eld. J. T. Crain and Deacon William B. Parker organized the church. The church entered the Saline Association on Sep. 21, 1851.

Among the early pastors were Elders Joseph Moley, S.F. Funk, J. E. McGovern, J.D. Hales, R. M. Thrasher, B.S. Taylor, R. M. Lindsey, J. R. Bowland, N.D. Jones, A. F. Lamb, R. F. Russell, Will Montgomery, Charles Skinner and O. F. Borland.

Pleasant Hill has added three new Sunday School rooms, nursery and kitchen to the church.

Fairplay Missionary Baptist Church Benton

Fairplay MBC, Saline Co., was organized on Feb. 17, 1855 in northern Hot Spring Co., about two miles south of the present location, near where Reyburn Creek crosses Military Road. This location would be near Sam Reyburn's plantation, known as "Fair Play Place." This probably accounts for the name "Fairplay."

Fairplay was admitted to the Saline Association in the fall of 1855.

On April 1, 1860, a group of twenty members withdrew from Old Fairplay and organized a new church called Pleasant Mount. It was also located in northern Hot Spring Co. In July its name was changed to Mount Zion. John Y. Lindsey was the first pastor and Andrew Hendrix was the first clerk. The Minute of the Saline Association for 1860 gives the following information on these churches:

Mt. Zion, admitted in 1860

Pastor: None listed; Clerk, Andrew Hendrix; Messengers, W. Graham, Andrew Hendrix, M. L. Nelson; 29 members. William Graham gave the land to Mt. Zion Church. The church was located about three miles north in Hwy. 67.

Fairplay, admitted in 1855

Pastor: John Y. Lindsey; Clerk, Calvin Devenport; messengers, R. D. Ross, R. B. Davenport, L. Brumbelow; 24 members
According to the 1936 Minute, John Y. Lindsey was the first pastor of Mt. Zion. On May 19, 1866, these two congregations consolidated by mutual agreement, with the new church retaining the name of Fairplay.

According to the 1986 minute, Howell Cooper first homesteaded the land where Fairplay Church and Cemetery are now located. He was the great-great grandfather of Pastor Havis Cooper.

Howell Cooper was born in NC about 1792. He migrated to AR by way of Jasper Co., GA and Hardeman Co., TN. The 1850 census of Saline Township, Hot Spring Co., showed Howell Cooper to own 120 acres of land in the northern part of Hot Spring Co. The Fairplay Baptist Church and Cemetery are located in the NE corner of that 120 acres.

Howell Cooper sold his property to Calvin Devenport prior to 1860. Calvin Devenport and his wife, Sarah F., donated five acres of land to the church on May 28, 1870. The deed reads in part, "said five acres of land Fairplay Baptist Church house now stands..."

This log church building was erected near the Chandler Branch, the present location, in Saline Co. Later a "better house" was built, which was destroyed by fire on the third Sunday in May, 1925.

John Y. Lindsey was pastor from 1855-1860, and R. M. Thrasher was pastor from 1866-69, 1874-79.

A Sunday School wing with six Sunday School rooms was added to the building in 1950, and the church was completely remodeled in the 1960's.

Sources: History of Fairplay Missionary Baptist Church, by Bro. Havis Cooper; Saline Association Centennial Minute, 1936, p. 50; Research Project #82 - 001, Arkansas History Commission, by Russell P. Baker

Big Creek Missionary Baptist Church SE of Malvern

Big Creek MBC was organized on July 1, 1855. Members of the organizing presbytery were John Hesson, Harry A. Gregory, James Ashley and John Pratt. John Hesson was an ordained preacher and John Pratt was an ordained deacon from Philadelphia Church.

Big Creek entered the Saline Association in 1855. The church is located about nine miles SE of Malvern.

Smith Creek Missionary Baptist Church Lonsdale

Smith Creek MBC was organized in 1858. It is believed the Kentucky MBC was the sponsoring church. The exact number in the organizing presbytery is unknown, but William H. Rigsby, John M. Hutchingson and Joseph Smith were among those who signed the charter. Eld. Wilkins Tate was the first pastor.

Smith Creek is believed to have entered the Association in 1859. The church entertained the Association in 1869.

Other pastors were Elders Jeff Neighbors, Andy Neighbors and S. F. Funk.

Fairview Missionary Baptist Church Sardis Community



Organized in 1854

Fairview Baptist Church, along with Philadelphia, Big Creek, and Liberty came into the Pine Bluff Baptist Association from the Saline Association at the first regular meeting at Providence Church, Oct. 17-20, 1861.

Fairview was first listed (name only) in the Saline Association in 1855 when the Association met with Philadelphia Church, SE of Prattsville. In the 1860 and 1861 minute the church was listed with John Walters as pastor and James Ball as clerk. In 1861 the membership was 27, the messengers were J. S. Morton, J. H. Blalock, and William Laster.

Eld. John Walters

Eld. John Walters was from the Tuscaloosa area of Alabama. He was with a group that migrated to the old Belfast area, during the early 1850's. He was a member of the Liberty Baptist Church. According to Jolene Davis, he bought land in Saline Co. on Oct. 23, 1854. John Walter's sister, Milly, was the wife of Warren Holiman, also from Anson Co., NC. Warren Holiman was the leader of the group from Anson Co., NC, first to Fayette Co., AL, and then to the Belfast area.

The church originally held services at the site of the McPherson Cemetery, about 3/4 miles north of the Sardis Community. Later the church was moved to the Sardis Community, then about 1869 the Gum Springs Church, which was organized in 1861, consolidated with Fairview. At that time the church moved to the present location, and a building (pictured below) was constructed by 1873.

About the same time, Eld. James Adams and members of his family organized another Baptist church in the vicinity of the McPherson Cemetery. In 1906 several families from the Fairview Church organized the Pleasant Hill Church in Sardis, the previous location of the Fairview Church. One of the leaders was Dr. J. D. Wright, who had been clerk of the Fairview Church in 1905. Pleasant Hill was one of four churches that left the Pine Bluff Association in 1916-1917, to affiliate with the Baptist State Convention. [51]

Providence Missionary Baptist Church

5212 Camden Cutoff, Pine Bluff



Providence MBC, located in western Jefferson Co., was organized on July 31, 1858. Eld. R. J. Coleman was doing missionary work in the area on behalf of the Judson Assoc. He had previously been pastor of the Pine Bluff Church.

The records of the Providence Church have been preserved, and Eld. R. J. Coleman prepared an autobiography of his life, which was published by the Baptist State Convention in 1895.

In May of 1858, Eld. Coleman wrote, "I made an appointment twelve miles west of Pine Bluff, where there never had been a Baptist sermon preached." Although Eld. Coleman located several Baptist families in the area, no meetinghouse was available.

James L. Davis, a local planter, made his home available for Eld. Coleman's preaching services. After preaching for three months, on the last day of July, seven members met at the Davis home and were organized into Providence Church. [52]

In his autobiography, Eld. Coleman wrote, "About the month of July they built a brush arbor about midway between the Princeton road and the Hot Springs road, where we worshipped until fall, at which time we had a glorious revival, and a number were added to the church."

"The church was named Providence, because, said the brethren, the Lord sent me there, therefore it was a Divine providence. hence, they named it Providence, thinking the name appropriate."

The new church continued to meet at the Davis home until the spring of 1859, when a brush arbor was built "about midway between the Princeton Road and the Hot Springs Road." The temporary structure was the site of a glorious revival, which saw a large number added to the church. In the fall of 1859, with the help of many in the community a log house of worship, 30 X 40 was built, and equipped with a \$5.95 wood stove. It was in this building the first session of the Pine Bluff Assoc. met in October, 1861. This building housed the church until about 1878.

The church petitioned the Judson Assoc. in 1858, and then withdrew in 1861 to help organize the Pine Bluff Assoc. The church reported 62 members.

The Civil War affected all churches of the area. Although Providence was not able to hold church conference on a regular basis, it appears the church continued during the war period. In fact, during the summer of 1863, with the Union Army poised to invade the area, the church experienced a remarkable revival season, which resulted in 45 baptisms, and other additions by letter and statement. However, near the end of the war and until 1868, church activities languished. The work was reactivated in September, 1868. The clerk was instructed "to enroll our names anew as a reorganized church. Although the church had only nine active members, a pastor was selected and messengers were elected to the Association.

The church was strong enough to host the Association in 1872. Then in 1873 the Providence and Sardis Churches helped organize the Friendship Association. The church reported a membership of 27 in 1871. In 1873 the church reported 36 members.

A Sunday school was organized in 1878. By 1881 the church reported 93 members. In August of 1882, twenty members were dismissed to form the Cedar Branch MBC, located in eastern Grant Co. In December of 1882, the church voted to move "nearer the Wright School House", and a new building was constructed and a cemetery was opened.

During the 1880's and 90's, the church experienced difficult times. A dispute involving the church and her pastor, Eld. Loftin Quinn, was submitted to the Friendship Association, of which the church was then a member. Two groups, one loyal to Eld. Quinn, the other opposed to him, sought recognition from the Association in 1884. The Association seated the group loyal to Eld. Quinn. The action by the Association resulted in the Providence Church returning to the Pine Bluff Association in 1886, where it has since remained. This protracted conflict apparently weakened the church since her membership, which stood at 26 in 1886, increased to but 35 by 1900.

The church seems to have early and consistently inclined toward the cause of "Landmarkism". In 1903 the church voted to cooperate with the newly formed General Association of Arkansas, which had come into existence in response to the State Convention's use of "middlemen" in doing mission work, and its tendency to centralize power in the denominational apparatus.

The church currently worships in a modern sanctuary erected in 1977, using the old church buildings for Sunday school space and a fellowship hall. Plans have been approved by the church to remove the old buildings and replace them with a new fellowship hall, nursery, pastor's study, and an educational complex, the cost of which is estimated to be \$120,000.00.

In October, 1961, the Pine Bluff Association, which was organized at Providence in October, 1861, celebrated its centennial at Providence Church. A large tent was erected on the site of the church building in which the first regular meeting of the Association was held in 1861. Over 1,000 attended, with visitors from some twenty other associations.

[1] Lewis Peyton Little, *Imprisoned Preachers and Religious Liberty in Virginia*, p. 105, 236, 1987 reprint by Church History Research and Archives.

[2] *The Arkansas Pioneer*, September, 1912, p. 14 and A. L. Hay, "Kentucky Church," *The Christian Repository*, Sep. 1858, p. 654. Hay is the source of the 1822 date, which was based on recollections, for the organization of the church and the hint that Toncray was the first pastor.

[3] *Saline Baptist Association, 1936 Minutes*, pp. 53-54.

[4] J. S. Rogers, *History of Arkansas Baptists*, p. 307, and the original minutes of the Association.

[5] E. Glenn Hinson, *A History of Baptists in Arkansas*, p. 6.

[6] "Little Rock Association," *Pulaski County Historical Review* (Fall, 1979), p. 86.

[7] J. S. Rogers, pp. 307-309, and original minutes.

[8] J. S. Rogers, p. 120.

[9] *Arkansas Gazette*, Dec. 18, 1833, and Harper, p. 8.

[10] Cleo Harper, *A History of the First 100 Years of the First Christian Church of Little Rock, 1821-1932* (1960) p. 6, and A. L. Hay.

[11] J. S. Rogers, pp. 311-312.

[12] W. Carl Brown was clerk of the Saline Assoc. from 1942 until 1951. This statement prefaced a detailed table indicating the year of meeting, church and county, moderator, clerk, number of churches represented, total by baptism and total membership. This information was printed in the 1951 Minute.

[13] Please refer to "Arkansas Roots" in *Pioneer Faith*, pp. 17-19 for additional information.

[14] Compiled by Russell P. Baker, *1974 Minute*, Pine Bluff Association.

[15] R. W. Glover. *History of Philadelphia Baptist Church*, handwritten manuscript.

[16] *Minutes*, Saline Baptist Association, 1843 and 1936.

[17] *Minutes*, Spring Creek Church

[18] *Marriage Book*, Tuscaloosa Co., AL

[19] 1850 U. S. Census: Saline Co., AR

[20] *Minutes*, Spring Creek Church

[21] R. W. Glover

[22] *Goodspeed's Central Arkansas*, p. 754; *Marriage Book "A"*; Saline Co., AR. Lindsey's license was not dated, but it was filed on Dec. 15, 1841.

[23] *Minutes*: Spring Creek Church. His work took him as far away as Hot Springs.

[24] *Goodspeed's Central Arkansas*, p. 757 and 781.

[25] 1830 U. S. Census: Bibb and Tuscaloosa Counties, AL

[26] *Goodspeed's Central Arkansas*, p. 750

- [27] I. M. Allen, *Triennial Baptist Register*, 1836, p. 208.
- [28] *Marriage Book "A"*: Saline Co. It was filed in Saline Co. on Dec. 6, 1841.
- [29] W. E. Paxton, *A History of the Baptists of Louisiana*, p. 607.
- [30] *Baptist Banner and Western Pioneer*, Jan. 27, 1842.
- [31] *Minutes*, Saline Association, 1843.
- [32] *Arkansas Baptist*, April 7, 1897.
- [33] C. G. "Crip" Hall, *Historical Report of the Secretary of State*, p. 197 and 624.
- [34] R. W. Glover
- [35] *Minutes*: Brushy Creek Missionary Baptist Church, Leola, AR
- [36] R. W. Glover
- [37] *Minutes*: Brushy Creek Missionary Baptist Church, Leola, AR
- [38] *Southwestern Baptist Chronicle*, Dec. 4, 1847; Aug. 12, 1848; and Dec. 2, 1848.
- [39] *Bond and Will Book*: Union Co., AR, p. 556
- [40] *Minutes*: Pine Bluff Association
- [41] Joshua Halbert was born on April 21, 1837. He joined the Baptist Church in 1852; was ordained a deacon in 1870. He was licensed to preach in 1872 and died at his home near Prattsville on Oct. 12, 1914. *Minutes*: Pine Bluff Association, 1961 and Glover.
- [42] J. J. Beavers, "Philadelphia Baptist Church, 1842-," *Arkansas Baptist*, April 7, 1897
- [43] Horton Sigma Bartlett, *Knob: Its History and Folklore*, p. 103.
- [44] R. C. Medaris, *Historical Sketch of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church*, Greene Co., AR, published at Jonesboro, Oct. 1, 1927.
- [45] Some of the information on Shiloh MBC was adopted from the history of the church placed in the 1975 minute of the Pine Bluff Association. Most of the information concerning the early settlers in Calvert Township, and particularly the information on Miles Milford Wallace was supplied by Russell P. Baker, Deputy Director of the Arkansas History Commission. Some of the information was printed in the 1974 Minute of the Pine Bluff Association and reprinted in the June 10, 1976 edition of the *Missionary Baptist Searchlight*. The Hubbards were some of Bro. Baker's family members.
- [46] The Jefferson County church was called Springhill, and was located east of the Hurricane Creek in what is now the Grapevine Community. After the Civil War, elements of the Springhill Church merged into the Sardis Church. The Wilkinsons and Gartmans were apparently part of this church. This church had ceased to function by 1905.
- [47] Elder Joab Pratt was born in Stokes Co., NC. After a successful ministry in the Tuscaloosa Baptist Association in Alabama, Elder Pratt led a wagon train in 1841 from that area to what is now Grant Co. Accompanying him were six of his children, also the Mayfields, McDaniels, Cobbs, Pumphries, and John Pratt, his brother, for whom the town of Prattsville was named. After settling in the area south of Prattsville, Elder Pratt, having established several churches in Alabama, began to hold services.
- After assisting with the organization of Shiloh in 1848, Elder Pratt moved to Union Co. and established several churches in that area.
- [48] Elder Aaron Bolt was born about 1796 in South Carolina. He came to Arkansas at an early date and settled in Clark Co., later moving to Saline Co. In 1836 he was a charter member of Spring Creek Church in Benton. That church ordained him to the Gospel Ministry on July 17, 1842. He served as pastor of Spring Creek Church in 1849. He died in his home in northern Saline Co. about 1861.
- [49] Adapted from the History and Archives Report, 1986 Minute, Pine Bluff Association.
- [50] Most of the churches were in Faulkner Co. and north during the early period. Also, crossing the Arkansas River posed a problem.
- [51] Pine Bluff Association, 1976 Minute, pp. 14-15.
- [52] In his autobiography (p. 19), Eld. Coleman wrote, "About May we organized a church with some eight or nine members, and very soon we had some accessions by baptism. There were a number of persons who witnessed the administration of baptism for the first time. There were some Methodists in the community, and of course they looked upon immersion as indecent."

[i] *Saline County Marriages Book "A"*, p. 38, and p. 85.

[ii] *Minutes of the Saline Baptist Association, 1851-1860 and Arkansas Pioneers*.

After the Civil War, Mrs. Lindsey filed a claim with the U. S. Government for damages inflicted during the Civil War. In this claim, she reported that both Confederate and Union soldiers had raided their homestead in securing food, horses and other supplies.
