STORY OF CLEVELAND COUNTY AND HER CHURCHES

A Little Sketch Deposited in the Corner Stone in the First Baptist Church Now Being Erected in the Town of Shelby

Prepared by Judge J. L. Webb.

The county of Cleveland was formed by an Act of the Legislature of North Carolina in the year 1841. It was named in honor of Governor Cleveland, of Revolutionary fame. The Act of the Legislature establishing the county provided for Commissioners to locate the county seat, and it has been a matter of wonder in which our beautiful little town is located by said Commissioners as a county seat for said county and the town was named for Col Isaac Shelby, another gentleman of Revolutionary fame.

Only two or three buildings stood when the town was incorporated. James Loyd, a noble citizen who resided a little more than one-fourth of a mile from the site of the new town, was then a resident and two small stands, donated to the Commissioners aforesaid, the land for the town site. He also donated the lot on which the town was erected and upon which the new church is now being erected.

The Presbyterian Church in the town of Shelby was organized in the year 1845 or 1846. The present Presbyterian church was erected in 1872 and is of the usual design of that time the congregation.

The Methodist church in the town of Shelby was organized in the year 1845 or 1846. The first church built near the site of the town was on the lot where the residence of Mr. John Lineberger now stands. It was a small wooden structure and was erected about the 1770 when the Methodist Church first took form on which the Methodist Church now stands and erected the present church building in 1857. About the year 1900 the congregation had the church which now stands upon said site erected. It is a splendid building.

The Episcopal church was organized in the town of Shelby in the year 1857 and the first church was built in 1858, largely through the efforts of Mr. David F. Bunting, now deceased. Said structure remained there until about the year 1870 when the church was erected on the site erected. The present structure was erected and built largely through the efforts of the members, now members Miss Emma Frick.

The Baptist church in the town of Shelby, now known as the First Baptist Church, was organized in the year 1845. The lower structure of the church was erected in 1846 and is one of the oldest in the county. The following is a short account of the history of the church:

"The church was then without a pastor for a little while, but during this time Rev. R. D. Malary was in charge. In the fall of 1845, he served as pastor and during the same time residing in the town of Shelby and was president of the Female College, served as pastor until Jan. 1st, 1846, when he went to New York City. During this period, Rev. H. W. Strickland was chosen as pastor and then served as such until Sep. 24th, 1845, when he resigned. Rev. Malary then had charge of the church, which tender of the church could be obtained, and on Nov. 1st, 1845 Rev. W. H. Strickland was chosen pastor and served as such until the 27th of March, 1846. During this time, there was no pastor again for a little while and the Rev. R. D. Malary on the 10th of Aug. 1857 was again elected temporary pastor, and served as such until the middle of November, 1857 when the Rev. J. M. McMahan was called pastor, and served as such until Jan. 1858. The Rev. C. P. Hamrick was then called pastor and served church as such from the 1st Sunday in July, 1850 until Feb. 1st, 1852. He resigned and Rev. J. L. Sproule was then called pastor and served until March 23rd, 1853. On Feb. 28th, 1855 Rev. H. J. Trexler was called pastor, and served until Oct. 1st, 1858. The church was without a pastor from that date until Jan. 22nd, 1897 Rev. R. C. Barnes was called pastor, and served as such until Jan. 11th, 1903, and served as such until Sunday, Feb. 14th, 1904. On Feb. 24th, 1904 Rev. M. E. Partlow was called pastor. His resignation took effect Nov. 1st, 1908. The church was then without a pastor for quite a little while. On the 1st day of March, 1909 our present pastor, Rev. A. Jenkins, was called and on the 31st day of March, 1909 he wrote as he would accept the call. The church has been preaching to us faithfully. I make the statement unhesitatingly that no church in North Carolina, in the same length of time more able and consecrated than those who have served the Shelby Baptist Church since its organization.

The following are the present members of the church: J. S. Gray, C. B. Sutcliffe, M. N. Hamrick, E. J. Wilson, J. H. Quinn, and C. P. Hamrick, and Rev. D. T. Haanick.

We lay the cornerstone of our new church this day the 10th of July, 1910. Let these walls be all beautiful, well arranged, and comfortable building and when it shall be dedicated to God and His people. Under the walls in its walls, the members who may worship therein be as a great light set upon a hill, giving light, power and strength to all within the touch of its rays.

JAS. L. WEBB.