

# STORY OF CLEVELAND COUNTY AND HER CHURCHES.

Dec. 16-1910

A Little Sketch Deposited in the Corner Stone in the New 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 Col. Benjamin Cleveland, of Revolutionary fame. The Act of the Legislature establishing the county provided for Commissioners to locate the county site, and in the year 1841 the ground on which our beautiful little town is located was selected by said Commissioners as a county site for said county and the town was named Shelby in honor of Col. Issac Shelby, another gentleman of Revolutionary fame.

Only two or three buildings are now standing which were erected soon after the town of Shelby was incorporated. James Love, a noble citizen who then resided a little more than one-fourth of a mile from where the Court House now stands, donated to the Commissioners aforesaid the land for the town site. He also donated the lot upon which the old Baptist churches were erected and upon which the new church is now being erected.

The Presbyterian Church in the town of Shelby was organized on the 19th day of September, 1858. The present Presbyterian church was constructed in 1875 and since that time the congregation has been worshipping therein.

The Methodist church in the town of Shelby was organized in the year 1845 or 1846. The first church constructed by the Methodist denomination in said town was on the lot where the residence of Mr. John Lineberger now stands. It was a neat wooden structure and remained there until about the 1876 when the Methodist congregation bought the site on which the Methodist church now stands and erected a brick structure about the year 1879. About the year 1900 the congregation had the structure which now stands upon said site erected. It is a splendid, handsome and well arranged church building.

The Episcopal church was organized in the town of Shelby in the year 1857 and the first church was built on the present in 1860, largely through the efforts of Mr. David Froneberger, now deceased. Said structure remained there until about the year 1902, when it was pulled down and the church on the lot erected. The present structure was erected and built largely through the efforts of one of its 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 1846. I find the following in one of the church records:

"Land for house given by James Love, a member of the church at Zoar, donates a parcel of ground in the town of Shelby for the purpose of building a Baptist church. During the year 1846

the efforts and liberality of William Roberts, Dr. Thos. Williams and David Warlick. Towards the close of the year 1846 Elder J. M. Webb, of Rutherford county, began to preach once a month in the new house. March 20 and 21st, 1847 a meeting was held in the new church to make arrangements for organizing a Baptist church. The names of the persons willing to become members of said church are enrolled as follows:

(I have not been able to ascertain the names of those enrolled)

The first deacons of the church were J. R. Logan, William Roberts, and David Warlick. William Roberts was the first church clerk. The building first constructed was a wooden one and painted white. It was a very comfortable building and seated, I suppose, from 200 to 250 people. It was heated in the winter by stoves. This structure remained as a church until about the year 1889 when it was pulled down and a brick structure was erected. When this church was provided for we thought we were to have a modern and beautiful

structure, but the architect and builders of this building were not as well informed about their business as were the designers and builders of Solomon's Temple. It was ill constructed, not very beautiful, cold in winter and very warm in summer. The building of a new church had been talked of at times by the members for the past two or three years, but not until a few months ago were final steps taken for the erection of such a church. On the 7th day of November 1909 our present pastor, Rev. C. A. Jenkins, suggested to the congregation that in his opinion the time had come when the church should take action in the matter and on that day a committee of twenty-two of the members were appointed by the church to investigate and see if means and ways could be provided for the erection of a new building. This committee met soon thereafter and at its first meeting about Nine Thousand Dollars were pledged by the committee alone and all of them went actively to work and within less time than forty days the sum of about Thirty Thousand Dollars was pledged and subscribed for the erection of a new building. The soliciting sub-committees, appointed by the general committee, were very active and faithful and much credit is due to them for this splendid sum of money. I desire to state here that the most active and zealous sub-committee in the raising of this fund was a committee of ladies headed by Miss Selma Webb. As soon as the subscriptions were made the committee of twenty-two reported its action back to the church and the church unanimously decided that the committee should go forward and have a new church erected. Several architects submitted designs and after giving them all careful consideration Messrs. Wheeler & Sterne, architects of Charlotte, N. C., were selected and the plan drawn by them was adopted by the committee and immediately after the con-

struction of said church, according to the plans and specifications of the architects, was made with Mr. W. Lee Harbin, of Lexington, N. C., who has the church now under construction. The building committee of our new church consists of Chas. C. Blanton, O. M. Mull, Marion Putnam, M. N. Hamrick and Rev. C. A. Jenkins and Jas. L. Webb.

The committee of twenty-two referred to above are as follows: James L. Webb, C. C. Blanton, O. M. Mull, J. T. Bowman, T. D. Lattimore, M. N. Hamrick, J. R. Dover, A. H. Webb, Marion Putnam, E. Y. Webb, Geo. Blanton, Rev. C. A. Jenkins, J. H. Quinn, B. T. Falls, L. S. Hamrick, J. J. McMurry, J. L. Suttle, Geo. L. English, W. B. Nix, H. D. Wilson, A. P. Weathers, E. M. Beam, Paul Webb and M. A. Grigg.

The following are the names of pastors who served the Baptist church in Shelby from its organization to the present time, to wit:

Rev. James Webb, of Rutherford county was elected its first pastor on Aug. 14th, 1874 and served as pastor until Dec. 23rd, 1849. He preached in this church monthly from the time it was erected until he was elected pastor, as aforesaid. Rev. M. C. Barnett followed Rev. Webb and was chosen pastor and served as such until November, 1851 when the Rev. Wade Hill was elected pastor and served for one year. On Dec. 25th 1852 A. J. Cansler was called as pastor and served until December, 1857 when Rev. T. Dixon was called as pastor for the year 1858 and was recalled for the year 1859. The second Sunday in February, 1860 Rev. Wade Hill was again called as pastor of the church and served one year. In December 1860 Dr. Crawley was called as pastor for the year 1861. He served as pastor of the church until the third Sunday in February, 1863 when Rev. T. R. Gains was called as pastor. He served until September 3rd 1864 when Dr. Crawley was called as pastor for the balance of that year. On the 4th Sunday in January, 1866 Rev. M. C. Barnett was again called as pastor for the year 1866 and served as such pastor until the close of the year 1870 when he was succeeded by Rev. N. B. Cobb who served the church as pastor until Aug. 11th, 1872 when he resigned, but continued to serve as its pastor until close of said year. On the 4th Sunday in November, 1872 Rev. Wade Hill was again elected pastor and served as such till the close of the year 1875. Rev. A. L. Stowe was then chosen as pastor and served till the close of the year 1879. On Feb. 5th J. B. Richardson was called as pastor, but he declined to accept the call and the church was without a pastor until about the middle of March, 1880 when Rev. J. A. White was called as pastor and served as such until Aug 26th, 1880. On Aug. 26th, 1880 Dr. W. A. Nelson having been elected pastor, took charge as such and served until the last of September, 1883, when he resigned. The church was then without a pastor for a little while, but during this time

Rev. R. D. Malarly, who was at that time residing in the town of Shelby and was president of the Female College, served the church as pastor until Jan. 1st, 1884. when Rev. B. W. Bussey was chosen as pastor and he served as such till Sept. 2nd, 1885 when he resigned. Rev. Malarly then supplied the church until pastor could be obtained and on Nov. 1st, 1885 Rev. W. H. Strickland was chosen pastor and served as such until the 27th of June, 1887. The church was without a pastor again for a little while and the Rev. R. D. Malarly on the 10th, of Aug. 1887 was again elected temporary pastor and served as such until about the middle of November, 1887 when the Rev. J. M. McManaway was called pastor and he served as such till June 1890. Rev. G. P. Hamrick was then called as pastor and served church as such from the 1st Sunday in July, 1890 until Feb. 1st, 1892. He resigned and Rev. J. L. Sproles was then called as pastor and served until March 25th 1894. Dr. J. D. Huffman was called as pastor on May, 1894 and served until Oct. 1st, 1896. The church was without a pastor from that date until Jan. 22nd, 1897. Rev. R. F. Tredway was elected pastor who took charge on Feb. 28th, 1897. Rev. Tredway resigned as pastor on the 12th of December, 1902 when Rev. W. D. Hubbard was elected as pastor on Jan. 11th, 1903 and he served as such until Sunday morning Feb. 14th, 1904. On Feb. 24th, 1904 Rev. M. E. Parrish was called as pastor. His resignation took effect Nov. 1st, 1908. The church was then without a pastor for quite a little while. On the 21st, day of March 1909 our present pastor, Rev. C. A. Jenkins, was called and on the 31st day of March, 1909 he wrote us he would accept the call, since which time he has been preaching to us faithfully. I make the statement unhesitatingly that no church in North Carolina has had pastors for 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 deacons of the church: J. S. Wray, C. B. Suttle, M. N. Hamrick, H. D. Wilson, J. H. Quinn, Geo. L. English, T. D. Lattimore and Dr. T. E. Hamrick.

We lay the cornerstone of our new church this the day of July, 1910. Let us hope when it is completed it will be a beautiful, well arranged, and comfortable building and when it shall be dedicated to God and His cause may the living church within its walls, the members who may worship therein be as a great light set upon a hill, giving light, power and strength to all those who may come within the touch of its rays.

JAS. L. WEBB.