

History Of Elk Creek Baptist Church



By Hilda Mae Duereson

The Baptist movement started in Virginia during the Great Awakening. This was the first religious reform movement which came with national incidence. The Baptists were of the "Big Three" who led this movement; the other two being the Methodist and Presbyterian. Thomas Jefferson and Meek Henry were leaders in urging religious freedom in Virginia. Louisa County was a part of the first inland religious frontier, where many of the ten families settled.

Elk Creek was organized in 1813 and was admitted to the Western Association that year. From 1813 to 1849 any and all early ministers were allowed to preach. After 1849 only Baptist ministers were allowed to preach in the new building which was then in use.

The land upon which the first church was built was given by Mary and Susanna Collins.

Abraham Waller was one of the early pastors. John A. Bilsley served as occasional teacher from 1829-1839. R. G. Egan and Joseph A. Mansfield also served as pastor during the 1830's. Herndon Frazer served from 1842 to 1856 and L. Halsey from 1857 for about 54 years.

At the first meeting held July 1813, a church constitution and rules of decorum were drawn up, copies of which are available today. From 1813 to 1818 this same constitution and

were fully recorded, the preacher served as moderator and cases were presented by members. Committees were appointed to check on the charges and bring a report back to the next monthly meeting where it was heard and settled. Some of the charges were as follows: playing cards for amusement; betting on the races; being overcome with intemperance; being absent without cause for more than twelve months; and not supporting the church. Sometimes the verdict handed down meant exclusion from church membership.

The first recorded church membership was in 1821 with 57 on roll. The first recorded Sunday School attendance was in 1853, listing 61 white and 174 colored members.

From the minutes the following is quoted: "In 1848 Elk Creek Church on motion", Resolved that this church is willing to adopt the plan of altering the constitution of the Georgian Association or rather to add another clause so as to make it a mission body as proposed and recommended to the church at their last session."

In 1849 the old church building was sold to the highest bidder for \$45. This, with the sum of \$2092 raised by subscriptions, was used to build a very substantial and stately new church of brick structure. This church stands today on a plot of land near the intersection of B. F. Vaughan, and R. N. Harris, near the original site, on the east side of the Spotsylvania

upon as a grand day for missions under the auspices of the female missionary society of the church, with all day services and a protracted meeting to commence the next day by order of the church."

Although the female members were not allowed a vote in the affairs of the church, they were active in raising money for the church. It is recorded that on one occasion they raised \$72 from the sale of home-made pillows and quilts.

The church was liberal in giving to missions. It is recorded that in September 1885 the church made a total contribution of \$60 to foreign, state, and home missions.

Clerks who served faithfully in the church were: Pallison Boxley, 1825-1853; R. F. Vaughan, 1882-1904; and W. B. Duereson, 1904-1939. Their minutes were well kept and very comprehensive and made possible the writing of this history. R. N. Harris served as treasurer from 1893 until his death in

1926 at which time his son, E. N. Harris, became treasurer and served until the early 1950's.

The church was remodeled in 1914 and a porch with colonial columns was added. At this time a stained glass window in memory of B. F. Vaughan was placed in the church by his wife.

The sanctuary still retains its original gallery on both sides and over the entrance which is used as Sunday School rooms today.

The present membership of Elk Creek Church includes many direct descendants of the founders of the early church.

TIME FOR PEACE

As fits the holy Christmas birth,
 Be this good friends our carol still—
 Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
 To men of gentle will.
 —Thackeray

*was given by THOMAS HARRIS
 B F Vaughan
 R N HARRIS*