

The Florida Baptist Historical Society **seeks to research, preserve and promote the legacy** of Florida Baptist: pastoral leaders and laity; past and present functioning Baptist churches and cooperating ministries; and those events that were historically significant to Florida Baptists. The Society's ministry mission is accomplished through a variety of ministry services provided to Florida Baptists. To underscore this emphasis the Society's monthly newsletter – formerly called *Here and Now* – assumes a new moniker – **LEGACY**. The goal is to highlight the legacy endowed by the people, churches and events in Florida Baptist history. The following are a sample of the legacies to be featured in the months ahead.

### **A Legacy Florida Baptist Church – Pigeon Creek Baptist Church**

Although some preaching and organized worship may have occurred earlier within the Florida Territory (which did not become a state until 1845), the Pigeon Creek Church, established January 7, 1821, holds the distinction of being the first organized Baptist church in the territory. It was located just south of the Georgia-Florida border near present-day Callahan, in Nassau county. Georgia pastor Fleming Bates, who co-founded the church with Isham Peacock, served as its first pastor.



The newly established church reflected the Calvinist theology of its founding leaders who had incorporated their scriptural perspective into the statement of faith and into the rules of decorum which provided for a strict code of discipline. The theology stressed an anti-missions' perspective which meant the congregation would not associate with the then existent foreign and domestic missionary societies, the Sunday school movement, and did not believe in a paid clergy.

The year following its founding – July 22, 1822 – the church received as a church member an African slave whose name was Peter Lopers. Pigeon Creek Church, like many frontier churches, accepted African-descendant persons on a regular basis. Membership rights (including voting privileges) and responsibilities varied from church to church. Generally African-descendant persons were permitted to participate in the regular worship services, although they were required to sit in designated seating at the back of the church building.

Delegates from the Pigeon Creek Church sought affiliation with the Piedmont Baptist Association in Georgia on October 13, 1821. Initially the church was one of the largest contributors to the association – around two dollars annually – and its membership of 44 was considered healthy. In 1825 the church hosted the annual meeting of the association and Fleming Bates was elected moderator. However, within a few years, the church's involvement in the association all but ceased. By 1831 the church stopped sending delegates to the association meeting and finally in 1839 the association voted to issue a letter of dismissal to the Pigeon Creek Church. By 1847, the church affiliated with the recently organized Alabama River (Georgia) Association, another anti-missions association.

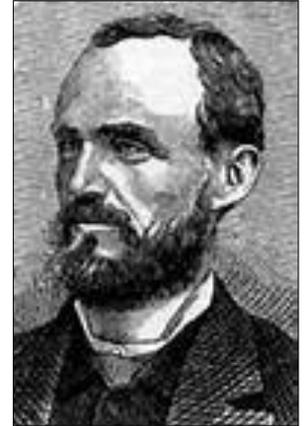
Subsequently, the Pigeon Creek Church became a Primitive Baptist congregation as did some other early Florida churches, forsaking the pro-missionary Southern Baptist Convention. The church was affiliated with the renamed Alabama River Primitive Baptist Association through much of the twentieth century. Without pastoral leadership and a dwindling membership, the church by late 2008 ceased holding its twice monthly services.

### **A Legacy Florida Baptist – Chastain V. Waugh**

Florida Baptist Chastain V. Waugh holds the distinction of having written Florida's first official state song. Titled "My Florida, My Florida," the song was derived from a poem Waugh composed and arranged to the words of the German melody "Der Tannenbaum," (better known as "O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree.")

The song was adopted by the Florida Legislature on May 12, 1913, and retained the official sanction for a little over two decades until it was replaced by the Legislature in 1935 with Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home" (also known as "Way Down the Swanee River").

Waugh had migrated to Florida in 1876 to accept the call as pastor of the Gainesville Baptist Church. During the first year, Waugh was an effective preacher, having added 35 members by baptism. He also was a strong proponent of the Sunday school movement which he used to increase church membership.



Chastain V. Waugh

In 1880, C. V. Waugh was among the first twelve men who were elected by the Florida Baptist State Convention to comprise the newly organized State Board of Missions. Unfortunately, the general economic depression during the decades following the Civil War created financial struggles for the Gainesville church which often was unable to fully pay the pastor's \$600 annual salary.

Eventually Waugh left the part-time pastorate and returned to education full-time. In 1893 he was named professor of ancient and modern languages at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College located in Lake City. Waugh's teaching credentials included more than the formal educational studies he acquired at Richmond College (Virginia) and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Waugh had taught himself to master English grammar, algebra, Latin, and Greek before enrolling in college. He also taught himself to read vocal music and was an avid composer.

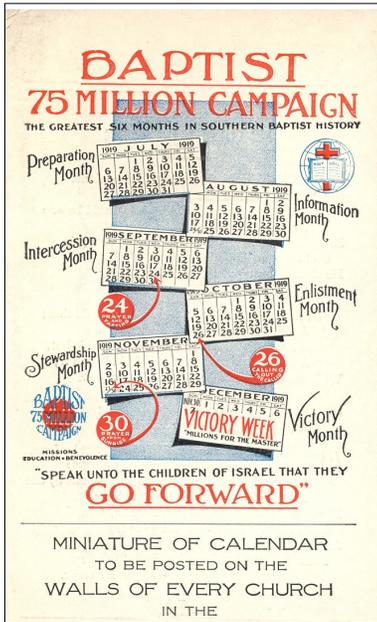
Waugh, who was born in Manchester, Virginia in June 8, 1848, died in Jacksonville on December 16, 1935, and is buried in Gainesville.

### **A Legacy Event – 75 Million Campaign Enhanced Missions Support**

"There is a Baptist consciousness, a sense of unity, of power, of cooperation such as our people have never before experienced," observed W. A. Hobson as he summarized Florida Baptists' response to the Southern Baptist 75 Million Campaign. The campaign was the forerunner to the present day Cooperative Program which funds missions and ministries commitments.

Faced with the challenge to raise \$1,000,000 in less than five months for the national fund solicitation effort, Florida Baptists through their churches contributed and pledged \$1,373,057.06. These gifts earned Florida the distinction of being the only state convention to have contributed the largest percentage in excess of their goal amount. This achievement was accomplished with only 68 percent (462) of Florida's churches participating, out of a potential 682 Florida congregations.

The 75 Million Campaign was designed to greatly increase the financial support provided to all missionary, educational and benevolent work undertaken by the Southern Baptist Convention and state Baptist conventions. Primarily the \$75 million fund solicitation effort sought financial resources to reduce and eliminate debts incurred by Southern Baptists' agencies of missions and education, as well as provide additional funds to expand the national and state mission ministries. The main beneficiaries of the financial campaign were: theological education (\$20 million); foreign missions (\$20 million); home missions (\$12 million); state missions



(\$11 million); assistance to retired ministers (\$5 million); orphanages (\$4.7 million); and hospitals (\$2.1 million). Each state convention received a portion of the funds raised from among its churches. Florida’s \$40,000 in shared proceeds was distributed to its DeLand college and Arcadia orphanage.

The plan, launched in May, 1919, was designed to secure pledges for the \$75 million goal amount within six months and promote the payment on the pledges through 1924. Despite a sluggish national economy following World War I, and after the first full year of promotion, Southern Baptists had pledged over \$92.6 million and had paid \$12.2 million towards the goal.

L. R. Scarborough, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, served as national campaign director. In Florida, S. B. Rogers, executive secretary-treasurer, Florida Baptist Convention, served as state director. He was assisted by W. A. Hobson, pastor, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, who served as the state campaign commissioner.

The significance of the campaign – beyond the \$58.5 million in actual receipts tallied by 1925 – was the realization by Southern Baptists of their potential for financially supporting missionary and benevolent endeavors. “For the first time an active effort was made to reach every Southern Baptist in a program of giving. Probably for the first time the average member of the average Baptist church was called upon to make a really significant missionary gift,” wrote national campaign promotions director Frank Burkhalter.

The “success” of the 75 Million Campaign set the stage for the 1925 creation of the Cooperative Program, as the ongoing Southern Baptist unified giving program to support nationwide and worldwide missionary and ministry endeavors.

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<p>A nine member board, appointed by the State Board of Missions, governs the ministry and mission of the Florida Baptist Historical Society, which is a fraternal organization of the Florida Baptist State Convention. [2018]</p>				