

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MULBERRY - HISTORICAL SKETCH

We assume that the First Baptist Church of Mulberry was organized in 1898. Elder W. M. McDonald led the fellowship of sixteen members to seek and receive membership in the South Florida Baptist Association on November 9, 1898. We do not have any records listing the names of those charter members, the number involved or the date of the fellowship's first meeting. The church met on one Sunday of each month, and the first meeting house, valued at \$400, was built on the northeast corner of what is now Canal Street and Church Avenue.

The original property was sold in 1934, and the school auditorium was secured as a temporary meeting place. Dr. R. E. Reed led the church in building the first section of the present auditorium. The church continued to meet in the school auditorium until the latter part of July, 1935, at which time the congregation moved into their incomplete but new building. A historical note from the church minutes states in part: "At this date the windows to our building are boarded up, we have sawdust for our floor, some pews from the old church, chairs and temporary benches for our seats, the Lord of Glory for our Father and Great Helper, in whom with faith and confidence we press toward completion of the fine temple which we erect to His name and honor, remembering that He has said; 'Fear not; I am with thee; be not dismayed: I am thy God, and will still give thee aid.' "

The two educational units were planned and completed during the ministry of Rev. Angus McClelland (1943-1955). Rev. J. Ralph Thomas led the church to purchase the Seigler property (1957). The Auditorium was enlarged to its present size under the leadership of Rev. Roy L. Reynolds (1958-1962). Rev. Thomas L. Rowe (1962-1964) led the church to establish the South Mulberry Baptist Chapel as a mission of the church. During the ministry of the present pastor the mission was constituted as the Southside Baptist Church of Mulberry.

This short historical sketch deals only with the names of pastors who have served the church and only with very brief details concerning material and physical developments. Many faithful members deserve credit for the continuing success of this church. The real development of the church will be known only in eternity as born again believers will shine as the stars forever and ever. The Glory belongs to God.

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