

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

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Sanford, E. E. (1853-1918) was born in Davis County, Indiana, and was licensed to preach at his home church in Washington, Indiana, on November 22, 1879. He was ordained at Edwardsport Church in Edwardsport, Indiana, on September 29, 1882. He was pastor at Edwardsport and Maria Creek churches in Indiana before moving to Winter Haven, Florida, and serving as pastor from 1905-1908. Sanford also served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Meade.

IN MEMORY OF REV. E. SANFORD, D.D.

September 18, 1853 — May 29, 1918

Pastor of First Baptist Church

1905 — 1908

Dr. Sanford was born on a farm near Washington, Davis County, Indiana, September 18, 1853 and died at Winter Haven, Florida, May 29, 1918. His life as a minister began at his old home church at Washington, Indiana, where he was licensed to preach November 22, 1879. *Brother Sanford* was ordained to the Gospel Ministry by the Edwardsport Church at Edwardsport, Indiana, September 29, 1882.

His first pastorate was with the Edwardsport Church together with Maria Creek Church, which is not only the oldest church in the State, but one of the most prominent. He was pastor of this church for ten years.

Dr. Sanford moved to Florida and located at Winter Haven March 8, 1905, and took charge of the Baptist Church and was the acceptable pastor for several years, until failing health forced him to a great extent to relinquish pastoral work. Although for several years he did considerable preaching and some pastoral work. He always took an active interest in denominational work in the State and was for several years a member of the Board of State

Missions. He never even after his health failed lost interest in his home church.

Brother Sanford was one ex-pastor that always worked in harmony with the church and its pastor, never assuming the role of critic but always assisting the pastor in every way possible.

By his own request and by previous arrangements, his funeral was conducted by *Dr. A.P. Montague*, President of Columbia College, assisted by *Rev. R.E. Reed* of Bartow, *Rev. Wallace Ware* of Lakeland and *Rev. S.G. Mullins* of Williston.

Resolved — That by the death of *Brother Sanford* the church has lost a true friend and ardent supporter and no one would have been missed more than him.

Resolved — further: That a Copy of this be spread on the church records and a copy be given the family.

Taken from the minutes June 5, 1918 which was signed by

W.D. Yonally
S.F. Poole
Committee

REV. W.G. LAW 1911 — 1915

January 5, 1912

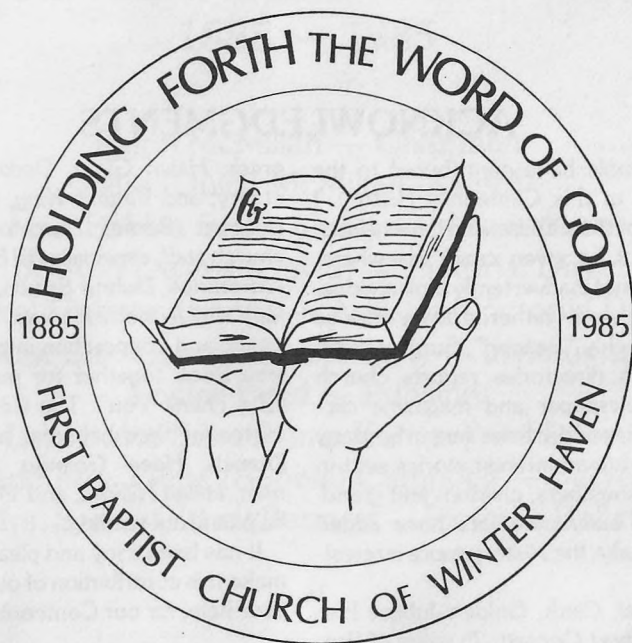
Excerpts taken from the Regular Annual Business meeting of the church at 2:00 o'clock promptly the meeting was opened with scripture reading by our beloved Brother and Pastor *W.G. Law*, followed with prayer by *Brother F.N. Porter*. The minutes of the last annual meeting of the church were read and unanimously approved by the church. The Clerk then

offered a brief summary report as to the standing of the church together with a heart full of thanksgiving and praise to God for the same report as follows:

To the Brethren assembled at this annual meeting of Winter Haven Baptist Church January 5, 1912.

Through the love and mercy of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we have all been spared through the year 1911, and

CENTENNIAL HISTORY
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
WINTER HAVEN, FLORIDA
1885—1985



Compiled by
Louise Vaughn Beauchamp

*“The Lord hath done great things
for us; whereof we are glad.”*

Psalm 126:3

First Baptist Church of Fort Meade Our History

In early 1906, a small courageous group of Baptists - 21 to be exact - formed what is now known as The First Baptist Church of Fort Meade, Florida. At the time, they met in various homes, a schoolhouse, the Methodist building in "old Fort Meade", and in the shade of trees when weather permitted.

Due to records being lost in a fire, the early membership records are limited. The only known original members who helped develop the church during the early years were Mr. and Mrs. F. N. Varn, Dr. O. B. Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Densfore, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Jones, Martha Smith, Sue Smith, Mrs. B. M. Barrow, Mr. and Mrs. Cummings, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. McAulay, and Mrs. Susan Hurst.

Soon after the group formed, Reverend Irvin Walden, from Plant City became their first pastor and commuted twice a month for preaching services. He soon resigned because of the great distance and the difficulties associated with traveling in 1906. A few months later, Reverend Richardson came down from the 'extreme north' and pastored the church for about two months before returning to his home territory. In the later part of 1906, Reverend E. E. Sanford from Winter Haven became their third pastor. With Mr. Fred N. Varn, one of the first Deacons, by his side, construction of the small congregation's first 40' x 60' concrete block sanctuary began. Dr. O. B. Lewis, who served as a Deacon of the church until his death, donated the lot that the sanctuary is built on. He lived in the house that was purchased in 1993 by the church for our Minister of Music.

In 1909, construction was completed and Reverend H. S. Howard was called to be the first resident pastor. Several pastors later and after World War I, the first pastorium was constructed in 1921 on the corner of Broadway and Oak Avenue for \$5,500. Dr. A. W. Mathis, who came to the church for a long and fruitful ministry, was the first pastor to live there. It was moved to its present location on the corner of Oak Avenue and 1st Street in 1950 and is occupied today by our Hispanic Minister.

Between 1939 and 1943, \$14,000 was spent on remodeling the old educational rooms and additional space was added. Reverend Andrew W. Tampling became the pastor in 1950. He led a two-week tent revival held in March and April of 1951. At end of that revival nearly 100 people were baptized in a service that lasted until 11:25 pm. During the middle of that baptismal service, which 1,018 people attended, a \$10,800 offering was taken up for the construction of a new sanctuary and in 1951 the church entered into a \$67,000 construction project of our present sanctuary. The original 1906 church building is still being used by the church.

For more than a century, the First Baptist Church has enjoyed the leadership of 24 pastors and five interim pastors. Many things have changed over those years but the same fundamental principles and doctrine have not. The church still stands for the same faith "once delivered unto the saints" in the book of Acts so long ago.

Above all else, our church is a fellowship of Christian love where we believe in ministering to persons of all ages by sharing the joy of Jesus Christ through planned activities for every age group. In essence, it is our belief that every member is a minister.

History
1885 - 1985

First Baptist Church
Winter Haven

PASTORS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. P. S. Crosier	1885-1892; 1895-1896
Rev. G. W. Robie	1893
Rev. O. J. Frior	1894-1897
Rev. M. Sloan	
Rev. J. H. Tharp	1902
Rev. Thompson	1903
Rev. Beck	1904
Rev. E. E. Sanford	1905-1908
Rev. S. G. Mullins	1909
Rev. S. R. Shimer	1910
Rev. W. G. Law	1911-1915
Rev. F. J. Griffin	1916-1917
Rev. R. N. McNemer	1917-1918
Dr. J. Harrison Griffin	1918-1938
Dr. Arthur Stovall	1938-1947
Dr. James P. Rodgers	1948-1954
Dr. Albert L. Carnett	1954-1970
Rev. Jacob Gamble	1970-1984



Turkey Creek,
Plant City

P A S T O R S

T.H. Jaudon	1878	Irvin Walden	1917
R.Y. Walden	1893	G.W. Messer	1928
W.M. McDonald	1895	W.W. Pace	1938
T.H. Jaudon	1897	F.A. Delk	1940
J.W. Johnson	1899	Henry Locklear	1942
R.Y. Walden	1900	F.R. Rightmire	1949
S.C. Sloane	1902	Oscar Lee Smith	1953
Irvin Walden	1903	Harry E. Dawkins	1957
R.T. Cadden	1906	Fred E. Richardson	1960
E. Sanford	1908	James A. Fortinberry	1962
W.M. McDonald	1910	Thomas A. Steele	1972

There were thirty-six additions to the church—nineteen were received for baptism, seventeen by letter, and there was one who made a public profession of faith who will join another church. We had a good meeting, the saints were helped, and some very dear to the members were saved.
E. S. ALDERMAN.

AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION

Below is the copy of a letter Dr. Brittain is sending out from the office to all pastors and church leaders. No further word is necessary. It is earnestly hoped that the brethren will give serious thought and consideration to the communication.—Editor.

IMPORTANT

Jacksonville, Fla., March 12, 1926.

My dear Brother:

You have doubtless learned by this time that Doctor Rogers is critically ill. We are hoping and praying for his early recovery, but his physicians state that with the best of care, it will be several weeks and possibly months before he is able to resume his duties again. Please join us in prayer to the Heavenly Physician that his health and strength may be restored.

During Doctor Rogers' absence from the office our Executive Board has laid on the writer a responsibility which doubles his duties, and we must look to you as a friend of our cause and ask for your help and sympathy which are so necessary if we are to succeed in the task laid out for us. Let us not think of it as a burden, but rather esteem it a privilege that we can serve with Him who said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, and ye shall have rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

The first quarter of 1926 has come to a close. During those three months, Florida Baptists have made a magnificent contribution to Foreign Missions through the Christmas Love Offering. We praise God for what you have done. But during this same time, we should have raised on the Co-operative Program, which includes all benevolences, in accordance with our agreement at the Tampa Convention, \$62,500.00. As a matter of fact, our records show that we have raised about half that amount. To be exact, there has passed through our office during this first quarter just \$33,276.36 to the credit of the General Program.

Under the direction of our Board, as authorized by the Convention, we are undertaking a larger work this year than ever before in our history. Beginning March 1st, our new Enrollment-evangelists start work, which will increase our State Mission payroll more than \$1,000 per month. We are trying to do more for the salvation and uplift of Florida than ever attempted before.

In last week's Witness we published a list of the churches which made contributions to the General Program during the first quarter. We thank God for those who are standing by the work. A careful study of the list will show that many of the churches have not sent in a dollar since December 1st to this cause.

In conclusion, we beg that you will seriously consider this situation with us, and bring it to the attention of your church. We urge speedy action. Let every one of us do his best in this moment of our need. If your church Treasurer has any money on hand, urge him to send it in at once; and may God's richest blessing be upon you and all His people; and may the Holy Spirit guide us as we strive to know and to do His will.

Yours cordially,

C. M. BRITAIN, Acting Secretary.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Fort Meade, Florida

The First Baptist Church, Fort Meade was organized in 1907, according to older Associational minutes. Rev. Irvin Walden of Plant City who has been keeping up a preaching appointment here was pastor at the time and there were about twenty charter members, and the organization was made in the old Methodist Church building in "Old Town." Each congregation it seems had preaching two Sundays per month from near and beginning. One Rev. Richardson from the North had a brief pastorate, but returned North. Elder E. Sanford became pastor, living at Winter Haven and preaching here twice per month. It was during his pastorate that the building of concrete blocks was erected.

Brother F. N. Varn, who still lives in Fort Meade, took the lead in erecting the house, taking a year out of his crop in order to make the blocks. He delights to tell of the struggles when there were only three families to take any responsible part in building. Mrs. J. O. Densford and Mr. Cummings, husband of Mrs. Mollie Campbell, and Brother Varn. As the work went on Brother Varn would raise all the money he could locally, and then get on his horse and ride over the county to get enough to pay off the hands every Saturday afternoon. Once he and Brother Sanford rode horseback to the South Florida Association, meeting at Alafia, according to his memory, and came home with thirteen hundred dollars toward the building. He made a trip to Jacksonville and secured \$450.00 through the State Mission Board, and completed the building free of debt.

Fifty-eight members were reported at the Association of 1909. Rev. H. S. Howard was pastor during 1910 being the first full time resident pastor of the church. That year the Church reported 87 members and a total financial expenditure of \$1,118.70. Rev. W. D. Turnley moved here from DeFuniak in April 1911 and served as pastor until Nov. 1912. Rev. J. A. Davis and Rev. Ed. S. Barnes were the next pastors serving terms of about equal length, and totaling three years. Brother Turnley again became pastor in Nov. 1915, serving about a year and two months, his two pastorates making almost three years.

Rev. Elmer A. Albritton was pastor during 1917. During the war the church went back to half time and secured the services of Rev. Thos. McDowell who lived at Homeland and served at both places. Rev. R. B. Davis came here from the Louisville Seminary in the early summer of 1919 for full time again. From the fall of 1920 Rev. Charles Winner served until May 1921.

The present pastor, A. W. Mathis, began June 1921 and is finishing out the fifth year of service. During this time about three hundred twenty members have been received and the present membership is around three hundred seventy. A comfortable pastorium was completed in 1925. For the past eight years the church has averaged a financial increase of about \$600.00 per

year over the preceding year. S. S. Int. and Sr. Unions and W. M. U. are doing fair work.—A. W. MATHIS.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Lake Wales, Florida

The First Baptist Church of Lake Wales, Florida, was organized July 23, 1916 with 25 members. The church worshipped in halls and tents until 1923. In that year the church began the erection of a building. In the early part of 1924 the basement was used for worship. The main auditorium was first used in November 1924, and with the exception of the basement the building is now practically completed. Early in 1925 a pipe organ was installed. There is no debt upon the church. The payments on the organ have been assumed by one of the members. It is estimated that \$5,000, or \$6,000 will complete the basement and some minor details on the outside.

Since the organization of the church Rev. H. G. Kenney, Rev. J. N. Ford, Rev. W. D. Entzinger, Rev. B. D. Law and Rev. E. A. Albritton have served as pastors. Rev. J. R. Wells and Rev. W. D. Hundley have served as supply pastors. Rev. E. S. Alderman, D. D., became pastor in June 1924, and is pastor at the present time.

The officers of the church are: Rev. E. S. Alderman, D. D., Pastor; H. F. Steedly, Clerk; Rollie Tillman, Treasurer; Deacons: G. V. Tillman, W. A. Varn, E. O. Ward, I. M. Harrell, J. F. Townsend, L. S. Acuff, L. B. Riles, P. P. Sanford, J. M. Tillman, H. F. Steedly. Trustees: G. V. Tillman, J. F. Townsend, and J. B. Briggs. Finance Committee: J. B. Briggs, Rollie Tillman, H. M. Curtis, W. L. Harrell and H. E. Draper. Superintendent of the Sunday School, I. M. Harrell; President of the Woman's Missionary Society, Mrs. Ida Grace; President of the B. Y. P. U., Allan Weaver; President of the Y. W. A., Miss Florine Johnson; Counselor of the Y. W. A., Mrs. E. S. Alderman.

From a tent to the present church building was a great advance, and the building was considered more than sufficient to meet the needs of the church for many years. Far seeing men had charge of the building plans, but none of them could foresee the growth of Lake Wales. It is evident now that the building is too small, and by the time the church is completed, certainly in the next few years, its enlargement will have to be seriously considered.

Two members have died since the pastor took charge in June 1924. It is remarkable that no one else, not a child, or any one living in Lake Wales in any way connected with the membership, has died. Another remarkable fact is that the Cradle Roll numbers 130. There are few churches having twice the number of members with 130 on the Cradle Roll.

The present membership is 353.

The church is on a sound financial basis. The budget for the present year, carefully prepared, has been largely oversubscribed. Every member has a package of 52 envelopes, and is urged to make weekly contributions. The pledge to the Co-operative Program has been in-

creased 50% this year by vote of the church, and the individual pledges to the Program to meet the church pledge warrant the confident belief that the contributions to Missions, Benevolences and Education will show an increase of 100% over last year.

Dr. Ellis A. Fuller of the Home Mission Board, assisted by Mr. Maury Pearson, singer, has just held a gracious meeting with the church.



LAKE WALES BAPTIST CHURCH
Lake Wales, Florida



REV. P. C. BARKLEY
Pastor South Side Church
Lakeland, Florida

*file: E. Sanford
JW*

FROM EVANGELIST SIMS.



R. L. BAKER,
Pastor at Arcadia, recently from Kentucky, and
very successful in some recent revivals.

We had a most delightful meeting at Ft. Myers after delivering some lectures. We only run the meeting eight days, then it was up to Christmas times. We had good crowds and there were perhaps a dozen additions to the church. Pastor E. K. Shults certainly has accomplished a great work here.

By the help of our Board a beautiful central corner lot has been purchased and the building moved on it and many repairs made, and a parsonage completed. The growth of the work has been gradual but yet substantial.

Sixty-two dollars was given me for State Missions for our ten days' meeting, and the week following the meeting the church raised the pastor's salary one hundred dollars and over two hundred dollars debt on parsonage cleared up, so Bro. Shults closes the year's work in fine shape, and he has a bright future before him.

From Ft. Myers then we went on the Editon steamer up the beautiful Caloosahatchee river to Alva. This was such a delightful trip! At Alva we found Bro. Glaze working hard, and what a grand work he is doing. With his own hands he has built one of the most beautiful houses in our state, and the building is now nearing completion. Our meeting run through Christmas week, even



E. SANFORD, later Haven,
Pastor at Ft. Mealy, where a fine stone church
building is just completed.

high and holy one back of all endeavor. So

members and the church with the assist-