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**Shoemaker, T. V.** served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Daytona Beach.

3/14/1929

## History of the First Baptist Church of Daytona

In compiling this history of our church, the author is indebted to Mrs. G. E. Neff and her sister Mrs. Gambol, for information of the first four years of its existence. To hear these good ladies tell of this time it is as exciting as fiction and so inspiring that no member of our church could help being thrilled with admiration for the old saints, who laid the foundation of our church.

In the year 1898, Dr. Johnson, an eminent minister of our faith, while wintering in DeLand, made a trip to Daytona Beach (or Daytona it was then called), and seeing possibilities for a church here, began to hunt out the Baptists and gather them together. Foremost among them he found A. M. Smith and his daughters, Mrs. Neff and Mrs. Gambol.

They secured as a meeting place the old opera house in the Graham Thompson building on Beach Street and there the church was organized by Dr. Johnson. The first board of deacons were A. M.

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Smith, J. R. Cole and S. L. Story.

The little group of people were blessed and soon began to long for a church home that belonged to them, so, in the summer of 1898, they secured the lot on which the church now stands, but having little wealth in their membership, did not see their way clear to building a church at that time.

## LUMBER WASHED ASHORE

During this summer one of our equinoctial storms swept through the state and after it had abated, Brother Smith and his daughter, Mrs. Neff, were walking along the beach, when they noticed a quantity of new planking being washed in by the tide. Mrs. Neff was so excited that she waded out to meet the incoming waves and would seize a plank and hold on for dear life until she could carry it to the shore. These people salvaged the whole lot of timber and seeing that here was the present solution for their church home, got two of the young men of the church, Elton Rich and Jesse McKinney, to haul the lumber to the church lot. Here, on the back of the lot, to allow room for building a church later, the floor and framework of a tabernacle were constructed, a canvas top was bought for \$40, and our church pioneers moved into the first church home.

About this time Mrs. Holden became active in the life of the church. She was a woman of wealth, but consecrated her money to the Lord and was the one, who first conceived the idea of building a real church. For this reason and because of the great love, which the membership bore her, she was called the mother of the church. She said that she would give \$500 if the church would raise \$500. In those days raising \$500 was as hard as raising \$50,000 today, but these people were determined and they found friends to help. Several gave money with the distinct understanding that the church was not to run up a debt. The membership was fortunate in having several carpenters among their number, who donated their work to the building. Bro. Smith was Treasurer of the building committee and although he was ill and not even able to sit up all the time, he had a cot moved into the church, where he lay and received contributions and told visitors about it.

Then in the summer of 1899 the Church was really begun.

As soon as the roof and the floors were completed the membership moved in. Their first windows were canvas ones, made by Mrs. Holden, Mrs. Neff and Mrs. Gambol.

Before the dedication of the Church the well loved Brother Smith died and his was the first funeral in the new Church. His grand daughter, Ruth Gambol, was the first person to be baptized in the church.

## OUT OF DEBT

When the members had gone on as far as they could with the building, they had a surprise visit from Dr. Johnson in the spring of 1900. After he was proudly shown over the church he asked how they were getting on financially, they told him that if they had one hundred dollars, they would be clear.

He said, "I have it in my pocket," and told them it had been given by interested friends in the North. This same spring the memorial windows to Deacon A. M. Smith and Mrs. Holden, and the other windows at the east end of the Church were put in. The large one in front was paid for by the tourists and dedicated to them.

The Pastors, who served the Church during these years were Dr. Johnson, Rev. Sheffield, Rev. Hendricks and Dr. Fulton. They were also helped by local ministers, among them Dear Dr. C. M. Bingham of the Congregational Church and Dr. Chaudoin of DeLand.

Following this time of many supplies in the pulpit, Rev. Andrews was called and remained as Pastor until April 1903, when Rev. J. P. Graham was called to the Pastorate and remained in the service of the Church until August First 1904. From that time until November first the pulpit was occupied by supplies. Nov. first Rev. T. V. Shoemaker accepted a call and remained until April 1906. The following September Dr. Howard B. Gibbons took up the work and remained with us as Pastor until November 1908.

In February 1909 Rev. A. Lincoln Abercrombie was called to the pulpit and served us faithfully until May 1914. Rev. Abercrombie was instrumental in establishing the Seabreeze Mission Church, which afterward grew into the present Calvary Baptist Church. After his pastorate some years, when he was working as a layman, he was also the moving spirit in establishing and organizing the Ridgewood Baptist Church in Holly Hill and served as pastor for that church until his death in 1927.

## REV. RIGHTMIRE'S MINISTRY

In November 1914 Rev. Holmes S. Rightmire began his ministry. In the second year of his pastorate, the church purchased the present parsonage from C. C. Barnes and immediately took possession. The old parsonage was rented for a time, but larger quarters for the Sunday School were soon needed and it was utilized for class rooms and Primary Department. In April 1919 Rev. Rightmire resigned his charge to take up Field work with the State Board. He carried on this work until August, when, being recalled by the church and feeling that his health would not stand the strain of Field work, he accepted the call and remained until February

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