

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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Simmons, T. W. served as pastor of Sharon Baptist Church (aka First Baptist) Callahan.

Sharon BC AKA FBC Callahan

Sharon early began to foster the expansion of the Gospel ministry by granting a license "to improve his talent" to Henry F. Parmenter at the second church conference, June 5, 1841.

The Church entered its new house with a dedication sermon, December 12, 1842, preached by Pastor McDonald from Isaiah 66:1.

Churches during this time period were much more exacting of their members than are our churches today. The original "Discipline" of Sharon provided that any male member absenting himself from a conference meeting had to give a reasonable excuse or face excommunication. A female member was allowed to absent herself three times before her membership was endangered. She had, however, to give a "lawful" excuse for each absence. A sure way to be excommunicated was for a member to dance or attend a church of another denomination too regularly.

This Baptist Church at Sharon lasted from 1841 to 1860, when it disbanded for a short time for lack of a pastor. It formed again in the Civil War years as the Baptist Church of Christ at Sharon, 1860 - 1867, when it was again named Sharon Baptist Church. When the settlement of Sharon became the town of Callahan, about 1858, the church became the Callahan Baptist Church.

The first members, Elder **T. W. Simmons**, church (thought to be a log cabin) was destroyed by forest fire, and the second structure was destroyed by "The Big Blow" in 1894. The third structure, built near Alligator Creek on East Brandies Avenue, near what was originally the Lewis and Eppie Blount home, (located just before you get to Lowe's feed store, East Brandies Ave., now Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave.), was used until the first brick structure was built of brick from Callahan's own brickyard, by W. W. Cushing, a local contractor, and was dedicated in 1908. On the 100th anniversary, in 1941, church membership was 242. At this time the active organizations were Sunday School, Baptist Training Union, and Women's Missionary Union, with one auxiliary. The church owned the parsonage. It became the First Baptist Church when other Baptist churches began forming near the Callahan area.

Among the former pastors, beginning 1841, at Sharon: Rev. James H. McDonald, George W. Bell, K. Chambers, Elder **T. W. Simmons**, C. A. Millett, and S. Weeks.

1845

The church resolved to join the Florida Association by letter and delegate. Brother Jones was chosen to write and bear the letter to the Association to be held at Madison County, October 18, 1845.

1846

Sharon Church voted to sign a petition to write a letter to the Florida Association of resignation and to form an association of its own. Brothers Jones, Lewis, and Sauls were chosen as delegates to bear that letter and Brother Jones was chosen to write said letter.