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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Smith, Joseph H. (1847-1924) was born in Terre Haute, Vigo County, Indiana. Smith moved to Florida in 1886, and organized the First Baptist Church, Bushnell. He also pastored churches in Clearwater, Tarpon Springs, Emmaus and Good Hope. Smith was survived by his second wife Florence Smith (m.1908).

Joseph H. Smith
Florida Baptist Minister
1847 - January 19, 1924

Joseph H. Smith was born in Terre Haute, Vigo County, Indiana, in 1847. On March 21, 1864, at age 17, he enlisted with other Indiana volunteers for service during the Civil War. From May 13-15, 1864, his unit fought in the Battle of Resaca, Georgia, during which he was injured. The injuries were such that he *"was a great and frequent sufferer all his remaining life."*

Research has not yet revealed the next 20-25 years of his life. It is presumed that he married and perhaps had a family. It is also presumed that he remained in Indiana.

By 1886/1887, he was in Florida and was the organizing and 'first settled' pastor of present-day First Baptist Church, Bushnell in Sumter County (Alachua Association). Per WPA records, he served the Bushnell church through 1890. Florida Baptist Annuals record him in Bushnell from 1890 to 1892, and in Magdalene, Hillsborough County, from 1893 to 1897. In 1898, his address was Pasco, Pasco County, Florida.

In 1902, per the records of South Florida Baptist Association, he was pastor of Clearwater Baptist Church (present-day Calvary). That same year, per Pasco Baptist Association records, he was pastor of Tarpon Springs Baptist Church. In 1903-1904, he lived in Lacoochee, a busy sawmill community in Pasco County and pastored Emmaus Baptist Church, a member of Pasco Baptist Association.

About 1904, per *Hudson*, one of the Makers of America series, he moved to that community on Pasco County's west coast. He was appointed postmaster of Hudson on June 27, 1906, a post he retained until 1921. In 1906 and 1907, he also pastored Good Hope Baptist Church in Hudson. He remarried in 1908, per the 1910 census. It was a second marriage for Joseph H. Smith and for Florence, his wife. He is listed in Pasco Baptist Association records as an ordained minister through 1912 and in Florida Baptist Convention records through 1921.

Joseph H. Smith died at his Hudson home on January 19, 1924. He was age 76. The *Dade City Banner* noted that *"he had preached all through this part of South Florida, and in consequence as well as because of his superior intelligence and knowledge of the Bible was widely and favorably known. His fireside and veranda were favorite gathering places for those who enjoyed such conversation. He will be greatly missed by all."* He was buried at *"the Baptist cemetery at Elfers"* on January 20, 1924. He was survived by his widow, Mrs. Florence Smith.

"The Baptist cemetery at Elfers" is the present-day West Elfers Cemetery. Due to cemetery neglect and vandalism over the last many years, there is no remaining evidence of his gravesite.

Judith R. Jolly, Dade City, Florida
September 30, 2012/March 2, 2015

Member, Board of Directors
Florida Baptist Historical Society

HISTORY
OF
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Alachua 1978
BUSHNELL

The First Baptist Church at Bushnell was organized in March 1887 by Rev. William Young, assisted by Rev. J.H. Smith. There were seven Charter Members: Rev. Young, Mr. A.M. Norwood, Mr. Jones, Mrs. Jones and daughter, and Mr. and Mrs. Wellons. Services were held in the school house once a month.

The Rev. J.H. Smith was the first pastor. The first members received for baptism were: Rev. Young's wife and daughter, Mary and Miss Minnie Norwood. This brought the membership to ten.

In 1889 Rev. Hughes was called as Pastor, and after three or four years he resigned because of ill health. He later served as pastor again, and during this time a Sunday School was organized with Mr. A.M. Norwood serving as SS Superintendent.

In 1893 Rev. Bean became pastor and the first church building was erected and dedicated in 1894. The lot on which it was built (where the present Pastorium stands) was donated by Mr. Norwood. In 1895 Rev. Bean resigned to become Superintendent of the Baptist Orphanage in Arcadia.

In 1900 the church called Rev. Noah Norwood as pastor. Following him as pastors were: Phillips, Entzminger, Rogers, Martin, Blizzard, Klein, Burnett, Howard, Peters and Padgett.

During Rev. Padgett's ministry in 1922-23, the first Pastorium was built, sponsored by the Ladies Missionary Society, on the lot across the street from the church. This lot was donated by T. Sol Beville of Pompano in honor of his mother, Mrs. Mary Beville. This property, west of the present church building, is now used for parking. The Pastorium was used until 1962, when it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Spooner, and moved to a site north of Bushnell.

In 1924, Rev. Patton became pastor. In 1925-26 the old church building was torn down, and a new building was erected on the same site.

Following Rev. Patton the following pastors served the church: Thompson; Ford; Fred Smith; E.C. Tyner; Morgan; J.F. Brantley; W.S. Wade; Bob Catledge; Whitney Lavender; Bob Catledge was re-called; Earle S. Honey; J.P. Bennett; C.H. Pollock.

During the pastorate of Rev. Pollock work was begun on the present church building. Rev. Pollock resigned to enter the Seminary, and Rev. Joe Engle served as pastor for a short time. In November 1954 Rev. D.D. Townsend became pastor. Under his leadership the Sanctuary and first phase of the Educational Building was completed, and dedicated on October 14, 1956. On December 30, 1956 the note was burned, clearing the church of all indebtedness. The second phase of the Educational Buildings was completed in February 1959. This annex is where the present offices, fellowship hall and kitchen are located.

April 8, 1959 plans were begun to establish a Mission in the Panasoffkee area. Surveys were made. Land was purchased, and on November 13, 1960, ground breaking ceremonies were held. This building was completed and dedicated on April 16, 1961. The Panasoffkee Baptist Church was organized on April 12, 1964.

Calvary, Clearwater (Pinellas, Suncoast)

Our Pastors . . .

Calvary has been blessed with amazingly strong and godly pastoral leadership. God used their shepherd hearts and surrendered wills to build a great church. Many of these leaders accepted the call in spite of the difficult, often seemingly insurmountable, challenges facing the fellowship. These men of character, faith and vision led the congregation on a journey of faithfulness that far exceeded what man alone could accomplish, or even imagine. While God used many men on this journey, there seemed to be one man in each generation that stood out as a stalwart of faith and vision. Their vignettes follow. This history would be incomplete, however, if mention was not made of Rev. Selwyn Smith and Rev. Walter Feagins. God sustained these men through some of Calvary's darkest days, using them to keep the journey going when it seemed as if the very existence of Calvary was uncertain. Their capable leadership led the people through a desperate time of division, depression and near financial ruin in the 1930s to become a strong body of faithful believers burning the mortgage note in 1944.

Calvary Pastors

1) C. S. Reynolds	1866 - 1876
2) W. F. Nigels	1876 - 1879
3) C. S. Reynolds	1879 - 1890
4) H. Edwards	1890 - 1892
5) J. W. Tucker	1896 - 1898
6) J. H. Smith	1902 - 1903
7) L.W. Simmons	1904 - 1907
8) C. H. Nash	1907 - 1909
9) W.G. Sparkman	1910 - 1914
10) K. Juniper	1914 - 1916
11) A.W. Lamar	1916 - 1919
12) A. J. Kroelinger	1919 - 1930
13) Norman Liddy	1930 - 1935
14) Selwyn Smith	1935 - 1937
15) Walter Feagins	1937 - 1952
16) O. E. Burton	1953 - 1969
17) Frank Gillham	1970 - 1975
18) William Anderson	1975 - 2002
19) Jerry Tidwell	2002 - 2003
20) William Rice	2004 - present

Vision Leadership Zeal Obedience