

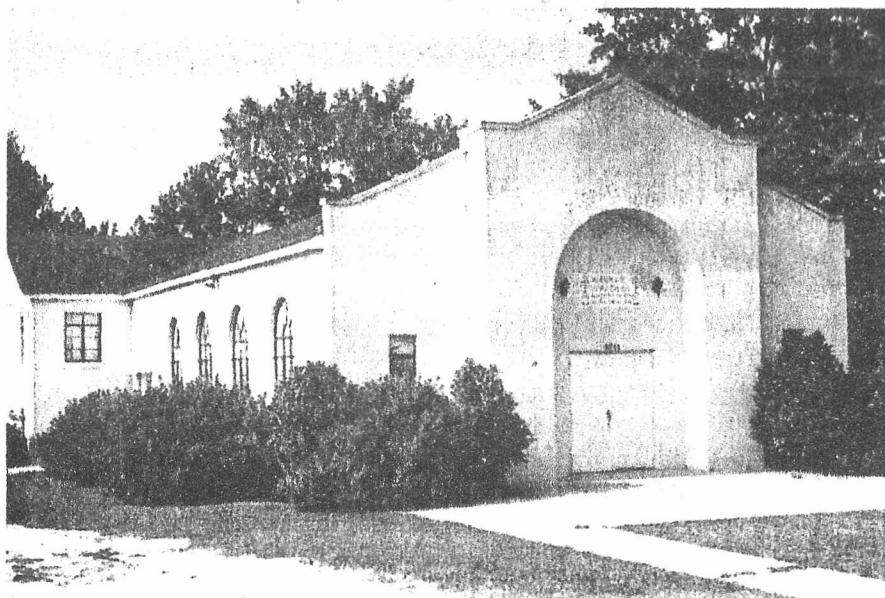
Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

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.

Visit our website at FloridaBaptistHistory.org

Stephens, B. L. served as pastor of Walnut Hill Baptist Church, Pensacola Bay Baptist Association.



HISTORY OF WALNUT HILL BAPTIST CHURCH

In 1915 the Southern States Lumber Company constructed a modern and comfortable one-room school building near the present Walnut Hill Station, east of the Frisco Railroad. This building was furnished and arranged by the company for classroom work and preaching services for the community and company employees. Walnut Hill Baptists and Methodist conducted preaching services and Sunday School jointly for a period of about four years.

On February 11, 1920, Rev. J. H. McNally, a Baptist minister from Atmore, Alabama began preaching on the second Sunday of each month. On June 13, 1920, under the leadership of Rev. McNally assisted by Rev. J. T. Fillingim of Bluff Springs, FL, the Walnut Hill Baptist Church was organized with eight charter members (Mr. & Mrs. J. H. Brown, Mr. & Mrs. J. J. Deaux, Mr. & Mrs. W. O. Cohron, Mr. & Mrs. W. A. Brown). Rev. J. H. McNally was called as pastor at a salary of \$60.00 per annum. Mr. W. A. Brown was elected clerk and deacon of the church.

Fifteen new members were added to the church through 1921. A revival in the summer of 1922, conducted by Rev. Allan Shell of Flomaton, AL, resulted in fifty-two additions to the church.

On October 5, 1924, a committee was named to consider plans and location for a new church building. On November 6, 1924, a favorable report was made to begin building at once. When Rev. A. J. Noblett was called as pastor on September 28, 1924, it was with the understanding that he would also supervise the construction of the new building. Construction was completed in the late spring of 1925. This building, which still stands today, is located on the north side of the highway on land donated by Mr. & Mrs. W. A. Brown.

Construction of the present sanctuary was completed in 1954 and the youth building (old pastorium) in 1958. A new pastorium was completed in 1976 and a fellowship building in 1986.

Since the church was organized, thirty-three pastors have been called for service. The church has had quarter-time, half-time, and full-time preaching. Following are some of the pastors who have served:

J. H. McNally	LaDon Hall
J. T. Fillingim	Larry Gafford
A. B. Noblett - 1924	Jesse Wood (Interim)
Rev. Stewart	Terrell Lanton (Interim)
B. L. Raines	James Butler
Leo Roberts	Richard Martindale (Interim)
Benjamin Barnett	Chester Free
Marvin White	James Dickson
Holly Secrist	David Boyd (Interim)
O'Neal Bell	Cary Hanks, Jr.
B. L. Stephens	Roy Chewning (Present Interim)

We take pride in knowing that one pastor, Cary Hanks, and his family left our church to go as a missionary with the Foreign Mission Board.

The church owns twenty-one acres of land, including one acre north of the highway with the old church building.

There is a large cemetery with nine blocks surveyed for streets and walkways, including 641 grave sites. There are records showing names, date of burial, lot and block numbers for all persons buried in the cemetery. Miss Lois Gibson of Walnut Hill was the first person buried - January 3, 1947, lot 30, block 4. Many more have followed since that date.

Pensacola Bay

1976

Walnut Hill:

Completed and dedicated a new pastorium. Ordained 1 new deacon.

WALNUT HILL:

1977

Paid note on new pastorium within one year. Held Note-Burning service August 1977

WALNUT HILL

1989

Held 100th Birthday Celebration on 3-3-89 for Mrs. Mary Bessie Bartley, our oldest member.

Jim Phillips
Dory Coburn
Tim George

James Boyd 2003-2007
Ted Bridges 2007