

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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Straner, Edward M. (1923-2004) was born in Largo, Florida the son of Frank and Virginia Marie Straner. He served in the U. S. Army Air Corps during World War II and two years as a U. S. Air Force chaplain in Alabama and Korea. Straner graduated from Stetson University and Southern Baptist Seminary. He served as pastor of West Gate Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, River Road Baptist Church, Palatka, and First Baptist Church, East Palatka. Straner served as an officer of the Florida Baptist Historical Society and wrote *A History of the St. Johns River Baptist Association*. He and his wife, Julie Ann Ellis Straner were married 53 years and had two daughters.

St. Johns River

Edward M. Straner, 81, of East Palatka, retired pastor and clerk of the **St. John River Baptist Association**, died Jan. 3. He served as pastor of several Florida churches, including River Road Baptist Church,

Palatka, and First Baptist Church, East Palatka. Straner served as an officer of the Florida Baptist Historical Society and wrote *A History of the St. Johns River Baptist Association, Inc.* He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Julie; and two daughters, Karen Evans and Kathy Straner.

Fla. Bapt. Witness 1/29/04
Pg. 10

a.m.

First Baptist Church of East Palatka,
P.O. Box 404, the Rev. Edward M. Straner;
Sunday school, 10 a.m., services 11
a.m., 7 p.m.; church training, 6 p.m.;
Wednesday prayer meeting 7:30 p.m.
* * *

Miss Julia Ellis Becomes Bride Of Edward Straner

DELAND — Edward M. Straner of Clearwater and his bride, the former Miss Julia Ann Ellis of this City, are honeymooning on the west coast of the State today following their 4 p. m. marriage yesterday.

The double ring ceremony was performed by Rev. R. Grady Snowden and Rev. John Pelham at First Baptist Church. The bride was given in marriage by her father, Rufus C. Ellis.

Miss Virginia Gerretson, organist, accompanied Miss Sylvia Griffis, who sang traditional numbers.

John Cheshire, Lake Wales, was best man and ushers were Vince Stadnick and Lester Cornet, DeLand, and William Guess of Sarasota.

Miss Mary Elizabeth Tribble of Vidalia, Ga., was maid of honor. She wore a gown of blue organdy over taffeta and carried a nosegay of white pom pams.

The bridesmaids all wore organdy over taffeta gowns and carried similar nosegays tied with ribbons to match their ensembles. Miss Judy Finne, Orlando, was in pale pink; Miss Nita Botts, DeLand, wore green and Miss Merle Dalrymple, Neopolis, N. C., was in yellow.

The bride's gown was of white embroidered organdy over taffeta

fashioned with a double peter pan collar and capped sleeves. She wore net mitts and a fingertip veil which was fastened to a pearl coronet. She carried a Bible topped with a large dahlia and surrounded with lily of the valley.

Mrs. Ellis was attired in a blue and black crepe with gold trim with which she wore black accessories and a corsage of yellow roses.

Miss Mickey Stout kept the bride's book at the reception which followed at the home of the bride's parents, 614 N. Palmetto Ave. Miss Gloria Mertz, Mrs. Jack Withington of Miami and Miss Mona Dalbo were circulating hostesses. Mrs. Colin Stout served the three tiered wedding cake and Mrs. W. H. Rivensbark and Mrs. Forbes Fuller of Jacksonville presided at the punch bowl.

For her wedding trip, the bride selected a navy blue crepe with white and navy accessories. The newlyweds will reside in Louisville, Ky., where the bridegroom will attend the theological seminary.

Out of town wedding guests included Mr. and Mrs. Jack Withington, Miami; Mr. and Mrs. Forbes Fuller and James Cox, Jacksonville; Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Ellis, Rome, Ga., and Dr. and Mrs. Cliff Ellis, McDonough, Ga.

Miss Julia Ann Ellis To Be Wed In Summer

From The News-Journal Bureau

DELAND—Mr. and Mrs. Rufus C. Ellis, 614 N. Palmetto have announced the engagement of their only daughter, Julia Ann, to Edward M. Straner, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Frank Straner of Clearwater.

The wedding will take place in late Summer.

The bride-to-be was born in Jacksonville and came to DeLand with her family 10 years ago. She was graduated from DeLand High School and will be graduated next month from Stetson where she is majoring in secretarial science. Miss Ellis is a member of Alpha Xi Delta, Town Girls Club and the Camera Club.

Mr. Straner, a native of Clearwater, received his early education in schools there. He served in the Army Air Corps four years during the war and is now a senior ministerial student at Stetson. He is planning to enter the Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in the Fall.

DeLeon Springs

By MRS. J. H. HARDY

Special To The News-Journal

DELEON SPRINGS — Mr. and Mrs. Bill Orr, of Fort Pierce, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Swanson, of Piereson, were guests of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Ascraft. Their daughter, Mrs. O. J. Camp, Sr., of DeLand, was also a guest Saturday.

Mr and Mrs. Harry Willis returned from Doorun, Ga., where they stayed several weeks with his mother and other relatives.

William White left Sunday for Jackson, Mich., after a visit here.

Rev. Edward Straner To Occupy Pulpit Of McDowell Baptist

The Rev. Edward Straner, of Stetson University, DeLand, Florida, will occupy the pulpit of the McDowell Baptist Church at both services today, in the absence of the pastor, the Rev. E. W. Ware, who is on vacation. All members of the church and friends are reminded of the services, and cordially invited to attend.

Baptist association honors Rev. Ed Straner for service

PALATKA — Recognition for an outstanding job of producing an associational annual went to the Rev. Ed Straner, clerk of the St. Johns River Baptist Association, at an annual Associational leadership planning conference at Lake Yale, recently.

He received a plaque for the top grade achievement by receiving a total of 128 points for basic requirements and special features in the 1981 annual.

ASSOCIATIONAL CLERKS in Florida perform an essential task in the work of the association and without clerks there would be no an-

nuals, no record minutes, no statistical records and no preserved historical information about its churches, it was noted.

He must also cooperate with local church clerks, the state convention, Sunday School board and the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and must serve on the associational council as well as work closely with associational leadership.

UNIFORM CHURCH letters from member church clerks must be sent in promptly, be accurate, complete and legible.

The Rev. Ed Straner also is pastor of East Palatka Baptist Church.

The Palm Beach Post
Mon, Mar 10, 1958 · Page 12

The invocation will be delivered by the Rev. Edward M. Straner, West Gate Baptist Church; the scripture reading by M. E. Rinker, chairman of deacons, West Palm Beach church; ordination prayer by the Rev. Allen Watson, Northwood Baptist Church; and the charge to the deacons by Rufus Holcomb, West Palm Beach.

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/106424450/edward_m-straner

Rev Edward M. "Ed" Straner VVeteran

Birth

27 Mar 1922

Largo, Pinellas County, Florida, USA

Death

3 Jan 2004 (aged 81)

East Palatka, Putnam County, Florida, USA

Burial

Palatka Memorial Gardens

Palatka, Putnam County, Florida, USA Show Map GPS-Latitude: 29.626258, Longitude: -

Rev. Edward M. "Ed" Straner, 81, of East Palatka died Saturday, January 3, 2004 at Kindred Hospital North Florida in Green Cove Springs following a brief illness.

He was born in Largo and grew up in Clearwater. He had been a resident of Putnam County for the past 41 years, coming from Belle Glade. He attended public schools in Clearwater; graduated from Stetson University in DeLand in 1950 and graduated from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1953. During World War II he served in the Army Air Corps as a B-24 radio mechanic, serving in the South Pacific. After graduation from seminary he served as an Air Force chaplain for two years, including service in Korea. He served in the pastoral ministry for 31 years including West Palm Beach, Belle Glade, River Road Baptist Church near Palatka (1963-1972), and First Baptist Church of East Palatka (1972-1987). He had also served faithfully as St. Johns River Baptist Association Clerk for the last 38 years. In addition, he served as a member and officer of the Florida Baptist Historical Society. He is the author of "A Century for Christ: A History of the St. Johns River Baptist Association, Inc., 1879-1979." He was working on an update to that book. He was also known for his many miniature paintings he distributed depicting the three crosses of Calvary along with the murals he had painted for many churches.

He was preceded in death by two brothers and sister-in-law, Albert and June Straner; and Frank Straner.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Julie Straner, East Palatka; two daughters and son-in-law, Karen and Steve Evans, Fort Pierce; and Kathy Straner, East Palatka; one brother, Rev. Joe (Becky) Straner, Toccoa, Ga.; one sister and brother-in-law, Anne and Paul Sterner, Grass Valley, Calif.; one sister-in-law, Grace Straner, Dunedin; one step-granddaughter, Brittany Evans, Fort Pierce; and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial services will be Thursday, Jan. 8 at First Baptist Church in Palatka with Dr. Pat Davidson, Dr. John Pelham, the Revs. Eddie Humes and Charlie Rabun officiating. Burial will be in Palatka Memorial Gardens at a later date.

Masters Funeral Home in Palatka is handling arrangements. (Palatka Daily News Obituary dtd 6 Jan 2004.)

He was the son of Frank Straner and Virginia Marie "Regina" Laurent

and three interim pastors. Present pastor John Pelham, came to First Baptist Church in March, 1963.

The church continues to minister in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with emphasis upon its ministries.

RIVER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH

Palatka, Florida

"One of 30,000"

On January 29, 1956, a group began worshipping in the home of Willie and Stella Roberts. The first two meetings were held in their living room and then moved into the garage of their home. This new work was called the River Road Baptist Chapel and was sponsored by the First Baptist Church of Palatka, Florida.

Among those serving on the mission committee were Dr. H. K. Mastella, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Carl Rivers, chairman, Frank Boutwell, Jack Scurry, and Claude Conway.

In March, 1956, the men of the congregation built a wooden frame building, consisting of four classrooms and an auditorium. The building was constructed on the land given to the chapel by Willie and Stella Roberts. This is where they worshipped until the present building was constructed in 1960.

The first regular speaker was Bro. Charlie Taylor, a layman from the First Baptist Church of Palatka, Florida. The first pianists were Mrs. Helen Wycoff and Mrs. Vivian Rivers, both of the First Baptist Church, and Ted Norris. The first song leaders were Joe Baggerley, Ted Norris, and Randell Driggers.

As the congregation grew, more space was needed for classrooms. The young people of the chapel moved their Sunday School classes to a wooden frame building near the chapel. This building belonged to James and Evelyn Bradshaw.

The first pastor called to serve was the Rev. Alton Stevens, from Flagler Beach, Florida, on December 31, 1956. Rev. Stevens and his wife, Martha, had two (2) sons. Rev. Stevens resigned on August 11, 1957.

In January 1958, Bro. James Bradshaw donated a new pulpit and several new pews to the chapel. Later, Bro. Bradshaw built a communion table, chairs, and smaller tables for the chapel.

The second pastor, Rev. Charles Smith, was called in April, 1958 from the Pine Grove Baptist Church, Gainesville, Florida.

Rev. Smith, his wife Laura, and daughters Sandra and Diane served here until May 15, 1960. During his ministry, construction of the present building was begun and the pastorium was purchased. Rev. Smith performed the first wedding to be held in the Chapel. Those married were Charles and Toni Hall on September 26, 1958.

On January 4, 1959, Bro. Harvey Cannon was ordained as deacon. Bro. Cannon was the first deacon to be ordained in the chapel. Those assisting in the ordination included: The late Rev. Marvin Stedham, Field Secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention, District No. 6, who gave the Charge to the Deacon; The Rev. V. J. Major of East Palatka Baptist Church, who gave the Charge to the Church; The Rev. C. E. Faulk, Lundy Baptist Church, who gave the Ordination Prayer; The Rev. Kenneth Hansen, pastor of the First Baptist Church, led the Examination of Deacon, assisted by Bro. Carl Rivers and Bro. John Barrantine, deacons of the First Baptist Church. The Benediction was given by Bro. Carl Rivers.

On July 10, 1960, the Rev. C. Ronald Cumbie was called from the Union Baptist Church, Defore, Kentucky as the chapel's third pastor. A native of Georgia, and a graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, he came with his wife Rosemary and daughter Pamela. Later that year, their son, Perry, was borne.

During his stay, the present building, consisting of an auditorium and thirteen (13) classrooms, was completed. The building was built by the men of the congregation with the late Harley Driggers as general contractor. The building was dedicated in October, 1960.

In February, 1963, Rev. Cumbie was called to pastor a church in Wauchula, Florida.

Rev. Edward M. Straner, a native of Clearwater, Florida, and a graduate of Stetson University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, was called and preached his first sermon, June 23, 1963. Rev. Straner came from Belle Glade, Florida where he had

served as assistant pastor and mission pastor for five and a half (5 1/2) years. Mrs. Straner was the former Julia Ann Ellis of Deland, daughters, Kathy and Karen.

During Rev. Straner's ministry the following served as deacons: John Hall, Sr., John Hall, Jr., Charles Hall, Peary Tomlinson, Lloyd Langston, Louis Geoghagen, Jr., Dan Ward, Sidney Allen, Harold Roberts, James D. Ford, Roy Childre and Wayne Shigley. Musicians were Mrs. Jewell Broer, Miss Viola Driggers (Mrs. Harris George), Miss Cindy Allen, pianists; Miss Jeannie Ford (Mrs. Tommy Clay, Jr.) organist and pianist; Ted Norris, James D. Ford, and Benny Godfrey, song leaders.

Bro. Carey Douglas of Mississippi preached four (4) revivals during this time and was greatly responsible for the spiritual growth of the church. The pastorium was also renovated during this time with the late Harley Driggers as contractor.

The mission was constituted into a church July 13, 1969. Among those participating in the service were: Rev. John Pelham, pastor, First Baptist Church, deacons, trustees, and members of the Mission Committee of the First Baptist Church and others. Rev. Edward M. Straner was called as first pastor of the River Road Baptist Church.

The members of the church greatly appreciate Dr. Mastella and Rev. Kenneth Hansen, former pastors of the First Baptist Church, and Rev. John Pelham, present pastor of the First Baptist Church and their members for working with us and standing behind us for 13 1/2 years as our mother church.

Rev. Straner was called as pastor of the First Baptist Church of East Palatka, Florida. During his last service as pastor, February 13, 1972, he baptized Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Cooper and Donnie Rawl. During the eight and a half years as pastor, the church debt was paid, the chapel constituted into a church, the pastorium renovated, and a total of 155 additions to the church.

The church received the Wurlitzer Organ as a gift from Mr. Reginal Varnes, Las Vegas, Nevada. Mr. Varnes is an uncle of Bro. Louis Geoghagen, Jr.

During the time between pastors, the late Rev. J. D. Kesterson was called as Interim Pastor and served from April, 1972 until January, 1973. During his stay, the church was air conditioned and the spiritual life of the church was greatly enriched.

The present pastor, the Rev. Barney Andrews came in January, 1973. Both he and his wife, Elease are natives of Lake Butler, Florida. They were called here from the Southside Baptist Church in Perry, Florida.

In January, 1973 the total membership of the church was 169, Sunday School enrolment 85, Church Training enrolment 25. The unified budget was fixed at \$11,430 with \$45 per year given to the associational missions.

During the first three years of his ministry, 106 additions have been added to the church, bringing the present membership to 264. The Sunday School is fully graded by departmental age, with several new classes added. The present Sunday School enrolment is 167. The Church Training has also been reorganized, with the present enrolment of 101 and an average weekly attendance of 62.

1974 was a great year in the life of the Church. During that year the spiritual life of the church was greatly enriched, reflecting in growth and achievements. In said year, the sanctuary was carpeted, the Minister of Music and Youth was called, and a bus ministry begun.

David Graves, student at Stetson University Music School, was called in October, 1974 as Minister of Music and Youth. Three active choirs have been organized with an enrolment of ninety (90) and an average weekly attendance of 63. Choir robes for the Adult Choir were purchased in the Spring of 1975. The Youth Choir went on its first Choir Tour in August of 1975.

Those serving as musicians during this time were: Mrs. Virginia (Richard) Roberts, Organist; Miss Cindy Allen, Pianist; Mrs. Viola (Harris) George, Youth Choir Pianist; and Kenneth Norris, Assistant Music Director.

On December 1, 1974, the church bus made its first run. After the morning worship service, the congregation dedicated the bus with prayer led by the pastor, Rev. Barney Andrews. The first Bus Director was Harold Roberts. Among those who served as bus drivers were: Martine Williams, Jr., A. O. Johns, Jr., Tommy Waller, David Graves, and Edward Wiley. There is an average of 28 riders on the bus.

The Church is free of debt and plans are under way to build a new auditorium.

We appreciate those who have worked in the church and added to its spiritual growth.