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.

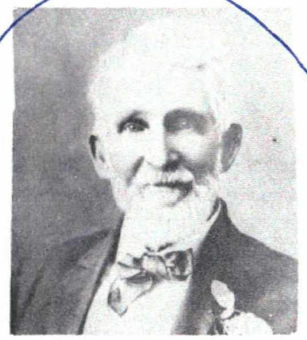
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Sturgis, H. H. was a Confederate veteran of the Civil War. He served as pastor of West Palm Beach Baptist Church in 1901, Key West Baptist Church and Eden Baptist Church, Brooksville. Sturgis was a founding member of First Baptist Church, Homestead. Sturgis and his wife had three daughters.

PASTORS OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

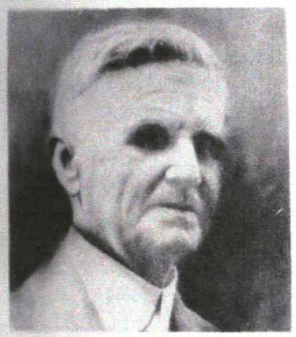
	Year	Membership
H. H. Sturges, Florida	1901-1903	37
W. R. Lambert, Alabama	1903	65
W. L. Savage, Jackson, Tenn.	1903-1904	83
C. V. Waugh, Lake City, Fla.	1904-1905	65
S. S. Gibson, Hendersonville, N.C.	1906-1911	101
Frank P. Gates, Lexington, Ky.	1913	107
C. R. Phillips, Florida	1913-1914	117
W. H. Hubbard, N. Y.	1915-1918	116
C. S. Lester, South Haven, Mich.	1919-1920	
E. B. Jenkins, Kershaw, S. C.	1920-1925	600
John Roach Straton, New York	1926	800
J. W. Williams	1926-1927	
C. H. Bolton, Alabama	1927-1939	1,438
Ira D. S. Knight, Virginia	1939-1945	1,739
R. Kelly White, North Carolina	1946-	2,644



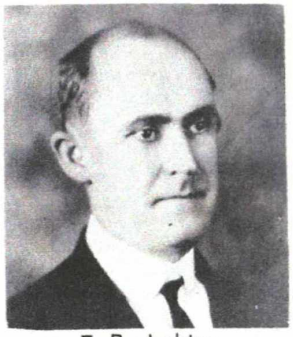
H. H. Sturges



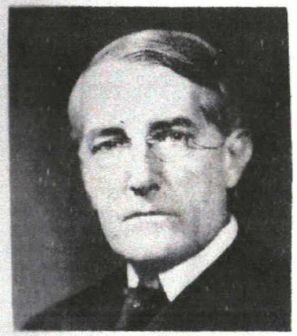
W. R. Lambert



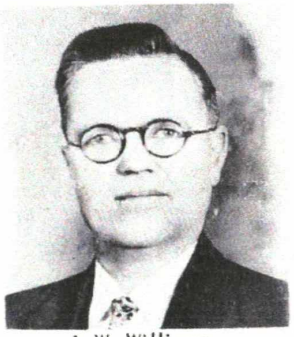
C. S. Lester



E. B. Jenkins



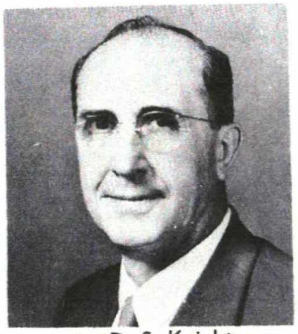
John Roach Straton



J. W. Williams



C. H. Bolton



Ira D. S. Knight

January 26, 1893, at Brooksville, Mr. Cobb married Anna S. Sturgis, a native of Dallas, Alabama, daughter of Rev. H. H. Sturgis. Her father has been a well known minister of the Baptist Church. In 1883 he moved to Hernando County, and in the performance of his duties he walked and rode horseback all over this section of the state. He is now living retired at the age of eighty. *History of Florida: Past and Present, Historical and Biographical,* Volume 2, p. 348.

The first church that was officially recorded as established and built in Homestead was First Baptist Church, organized on September 5, 1909, with founding members Reverend H. H. Sturgis, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Horne, Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Campbell and Mrs. S. E. Livingston. *Homestead, Florida: From Railroad Boom to Sonic Boom.*

H. H. Sturgis served as pastor of West Palm Beach Baptist Church in 1901, Key West Baptist Church and Eden Baptist Church, Brooksville. Sturgis was a founding member of First Baptist Church, Homestead. Source: *Indian River Baptist Association Minutes, 1901*, p. 14. Florida Baptist Historical Society files.

Key West: Baptist Church, the Old and the New. The names of the succeeding pastors are Reverends H. M. King, W. W. Bostwick, J. L. D. Hillyer, R. F. Hart, W. H. House, T. J. Porter, James L. Rogers, H. H. Sturgis, J. W. Tucker, M. A. Clonts, who served twice as pastor, W. A. Norwood who served a few months in the interim, and Earl D. Sims. Rev. C. E. W. Dobbs, the present pastor came here in September, 1910.

The Miami News
Fri, Mar 30, 1917 -Page 1

GOVERNOR IS FOR LARGER PENSIONS AND MORE PROMPT PAYMENT TO THE C. S. A. VETERANS

Executive Writes Rev. H. H. Sturgis of Homestead He Will Endeavor to Fulfill Platform Pledge

Governor Catts intends to do all he can to get larger pensions for the old soldiers and more prompt payment. He so declared on the stump last summer, and writes Rev. H. H. Sturgis of Homestead. Replying to a letter of inquiry from Rev. Mr. Sturgis, a Confederate veteran, Governor Catts writes:

"Yours of recent date to hand telling me of the Confederate veterans and asking me to help get them larger pensions and also to have their pensions paid promptly. I spoke about this on the platform wherever I appeared during the campaign, and stated that I would urge the passage of these laws by the Florida legislature. I have already incorporated into my message both of these clauses; first, that they be paid more pensions; second, that they be paid monthly.

"I desire you to tell the old Confederate veterans in your section of the state that I am going to do all I can for them. You well know that my father was a Confederate captain and of course his son could not do anything but sustain the old Confederate soldiers."

The Palm Beach Post
Sun, Dec 03, 1922 ·Page 36

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

The First Baptist Church was organized in September, 1901, by Rev. [illegible] [illegible]. Sturgis. Seventeen people met in the "upper room" of the building, then known as the public reading room, and there the First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach was organized. There were seventeen names entered on the roll as charter members of the organization: James Holley, Mrs. James Holley, Thomas Holley, Mark Holley, Mrs. F. E. Barco, Rev. F. M. Blitch, J. C. Harris, Mrs. J. [illegible] Waters, Miss Edna Raney, Mrs. McGriff, A. D. Cain, Mrs. M. P. Cain, Mrs. Peters, Mrs. Ina J. Clark, Robert J. W. McNair, and two others whose names are not recalled. Rev. [illegible]. Sturgis was elected the first pastor of the church. James Holley was elected the first deacon; Mark Holley was treasurer; J. C. Harris the first clerk; F. M. Blitch was made superintendent of the Sunday School. New members came in by letter and baptism. Brethren A. P. Anthony, Brantly and J. L. Grieg were added to the board of deacons.

The church continued to grow in numbers, and interest, and a frame building was erected on the lot on Clematis avenue. For a great number of years the congregation worshipped in this building. About seven years ago this building and lot were sold and the church was moved to its present location, the

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The Palm Beach Post
Sun, Dec 03, 1922 ·Page 36

corner of Gardenia and Poinsettia streets. The present structure was completed during the pastorate of Dr. W. H. Hubbard. It was during this time that the church came to take its place with the other churches of the city. Through the work of Dr. Hubbard all departments of the church work were strengthened and enlarged.

With the building of the new structure there was a large debt on the church, which continued for several years. This debt was wiped off on the 20th of June, 1921. During the present pastorate of Edward B. Jenkins, the church has been painted outside and in, and many repairs made on the church. The Sunday School has been trebled, having had 206 present at Sunday School last Sunday, the largest attendance in the history of the Sunday School. New rooms have been fitted up, and new classes have been organized, the Baraca class for young men and the Philathea class for young women. These classes have an enrollment of over thirty each. There has been organized the Senior, Junior and Intermediate B. Y. P. U. The Senior B. Y. P. U. has a membership of thirty-five and won the loving cup in October at the session of the Florida East Coast B. Y. P. U., which met at Delray. This cup was given for the best record during the past quarter. The Junior B. Y. P. U. numbers thirty of the boys and girls. The Intermediate B. Y. P. U. was just organized.

The Woman's Missionary Society contributed $239 to the $75,000,000 campaign of the church. They sent away Thanksgiving and Christmas boxes to the orphanage at Arcadia. At home they made sick calls, visits to the shutins and sent flowers to the hospitals.

During the present pastorate the membership has increased 110. There are now 206 members of the church. During the past year the church raised for all expenses the sum of $7,582.08. Of this sum $1,652.03 went for missions for the $75,000,000 campaign of the Southern Baptist convention. In many respects this has been the best year in the history of the church.

Lack of room in the Sunday School demands that more space be acquired in order to take care of the growing work. At an early date the church will consider the question as to whether to build or enlarge the present structure.

The First Baptist Church has taken rank with the leading

churches of the city, and is advancing along both spiritual and material lines. During the years of the history of the church there have been sacrifices made, there have been many hindrances to the growth of the church, but now the church is on the upgrade. There are those who have stood faithful and true through all the history of the church, while some have drawn away, but the work goes on and the church is fulfilling its mission in the community of preaching the gospel, and doing its part in the upbuilding of the kingdom.

Jacksonville Journal
Mon, Mar 10, 1913 · Page 8

or more men traveling on one ticket.

MRS. STURGIS DEAD.

Associated Press Leased Wire.

Sanford, March 10.—Mrs. H. H. Sturgis, who has been in ill health for some years, died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. J. T. Lee. Mrs. Sturgis leaves to mourn her loss a husband, Rev. H. H. Sturgis, and three daughters, Mrs. Wm. Cobb, of Brooksville; Mrs. E. V. Booth, of St. Cloud, and Mrs. J. T. Lee, of this city.

The funeral services were conducted by Rev. J. B. Wildman and the interment was in Lakeview Cemetery.

BUYS VALUABLE PROPERTY.

to denominational people of today. In April, 1847, Mr. Doolittle returned to his northern home, when Mr. J. H. Breaker became pastor, and preached at the court house, and in the Methodist chapel.

During Mr. Breaker's pastorate the first meeting house was contracted for; the price being six hundred dollars. This house was opened for worship January 2, 1849.

From 1852 to 1890 the records of the church are lost. The church however, was not prosperous, the constant change of pastors preventing any progress.

During the Civil War the white Baptists drifted into other churches, and the church building was taken possession of by the negro Baptists, who held services there until the fall of 1879, when Rev. William F. Wood, who had been a chaplain in the Union Army, came to Key West and revived interest in the Baptist church. He continued as pastor until early in 1900, when he went to Fernandina, where he died. During his pastorate in Key West he served as a missionary in Cienfuegos, Cuba, for about two years. He was the first evangelical missionary to that island.

In 1866 the church building was destroyed by fire, and the present Baptist church was shortly afterwards erected, largely through the generosity of Mr. John White, who was for more than forty years a member of the congregation. A handsome memorial window to him now adorns the front of the edifice.

The names of the succeeding pastors are Reverends H. M. King, W. W. Bostwick, J. L. D. Hillyer, R. F. Hart, W. H. House, T. J. Porter, James L. Rogers, H. H. Sturgis, J. W. Tucker, M. A. Clonts, who served twice as pastor, W. A. Norwood who served a few months in the interim, and Earl D. Sims. Rev. C. E. W. Dobbs, the present pastor came here in September, 1910.

During Mr. White's life, and the pastorate of Mr. Wood the church thrived to a remarkable degree, and became one of the foremost evangelical influences in the city. After Mr. White's death the congregation not being wealthy, funds for the support of the church were hard to raise, and it was difficult to secure and keep the services of a pastor, so the congregation gradually dwindled away.

During the pastorate of Rev. M. A. Clonts it regained its old time membership. Mr. Clonts first came to Key West in August, 1901, and stayed until October, 1902. Air. Norwood succeeded him and served nearly a year. The church was again left pastorless from August, 1903, until Mr. Clonts returned in April, 1904. It was then that the church started on its present era of prosperity. During his pastorate the old First Baptist Church was formally dissolved, and the Eaton Street Baptist Church organized on March 23, 1905. On March 3, 1901, the old church unanimously voted to transfer the property to the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, but nothing was done towards the transfer until Mr. Clonts' second pastorate, when it was finally consummated. The church was then repaired and improved by the addition of the new front, with its attractive columns, and a pastorium was erected. Mr. Clonts ended his pastorate here September 30, 1908, and had a church for a short time in Jacksonville. He has since been engaged in life insurance, and has prospered.

Rev. Earl D. Sims was pastor from June, 1909, until July 31, 1910.

The church under the pastorate of Rev. C. E. W. Dobbs, has grown in membership and grace, and is now one of the strong religious influences on the island.

The Baptist pastors of Key West have had the hardest tasks of any of our ministers, as each one has found the small congregation badly scattered, and have had to "Watch the things they gave their. lives to, broken, and stoop and build them up with worn-out tools."

The Miami News
Sat, Nov 04, 1916 · Page 1

CATTS' FATHER A CONFEDERATE LEADER IN WAR BETWEENSTATES

Neighbor of Family Gives Lie To Canard Circulated By Knott Contingent Regarding Nominee

Rev. H. H. Sturgiss Declares Sidney J. Catts To Be "Upright, Patriotic, Christian Gentleman"

Sidney J. Catts, the democratic nominee for governor of Florida, has never slandered the Confederate veteran and he himself is a son of a Confederate captain, so declared the Rev. H. H. Sturgis, of Homestead, veteran Baptist preacher, today. Mr. Sturgis lived as a neighbor to the Catts family during ante-belum days and has kept track of the family since the great war, and states emphatically that Sidney Catts "is an upright, patriotic, Christian gentleman, born and bred in the south with the southern view and glorying in the southern ideals."

Before the war Mr. Sturgis lived in Pleasantville, Alabama, where his father was pastor of the Baptist church, and the Catts family worshipped at that church. When the war broke out the father of Sidney Catts organized the first company of Confederate infantry in Pleasantville and was captain of it. Mr. Sturgis belonged to another company, but fought beside Captain Catts's company in one or more battles. "Even though I didn't know the man I could feel morally certain that Mr. Catts would not go back on the Confederate veterans when he himself is the son of a Confederate captain," said Mr. Sturgis.

Mr. Sturgis renewed his acquaintance with Mr. Catts some four years ago after the latter had come to Florida as pastor of the Baptist church at DeFuniak Springs. Mr. Sturgis has recently returned from a visit to Tampa, Brooksville and Sanford, and says that the Catts sentiment is growing and that he is confident he will be elected, even though prior to the primary Mr. Sturgis was a supporter of Mr. Knott.

"You remember the old saying 'Vox Populi, Vox Dei,' the voice of the people is the voice of God," said Mr. Sturgis. "Well, it seems as though they were trying to change it in this state to 'Vox Judiciary, Vox Dei,' the voice of the courts is the voice of God."

1 of 15 matches

The Palm Beach Post
Thu, Jun 28, 1923 · Page 3

ev. H. H. Sturgis Is Visiting Here

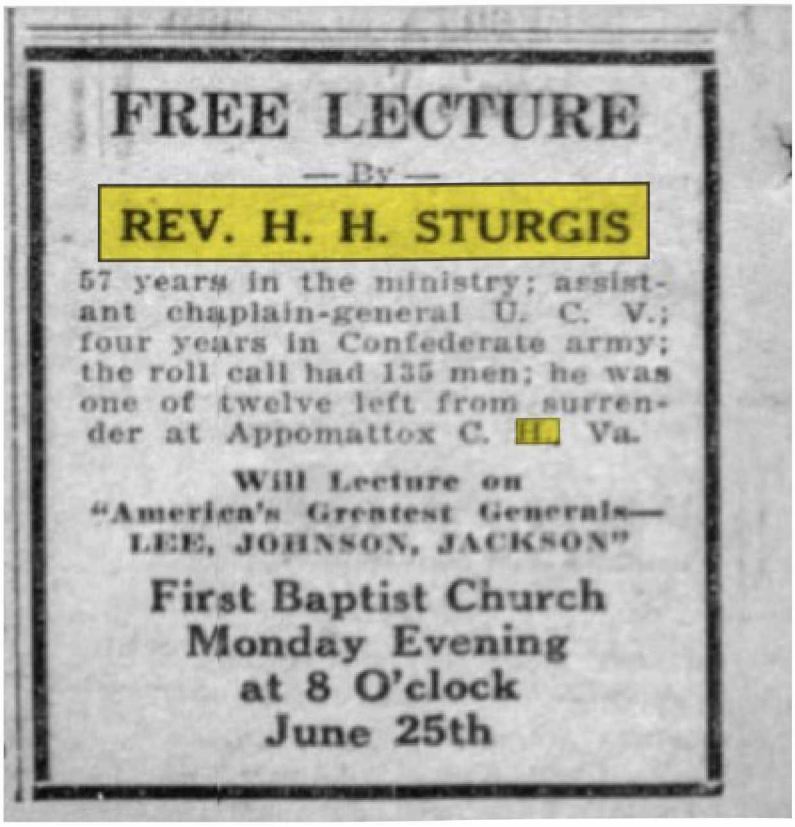
Rev. H. H. Sturgis, formerly pas- of the Baptist church in this when it was in its infancy, and greatly helped to get it fully firmly established here, and erward did much evangelical rk in this district, arrived in the yesterday morning. In late ars he has been living part of time at Miami and part of the e at Homestead. Rev. Sturgis is the guest of some of his old parishioners.

Though getting along well in years he is carrying his age well and proposes, while here, if suitable arrangements can be made, to give his free lecture on "America's Greatest Generals—Lee, Johnson, Jackson." He is fully competent as he was assistant chaplain general of the U. C. V. after having served for four years in the Confederate army.

Doctor Sturgis is very well known to the older citizens and has many friends in this city who will be pleased to meet him again and will enjoy hearing him give his talk on such noted and much loved great men of the south. It should be such a talk as can and should be enjoyed by all persons whether they came from the north or south of the Mason and Dixon line.

Skirts—a big savings at our Summer Reduction Sale. Elizabeth Manning Shop.

The Miami Herald
Mon, Jun 25, 1923 · Page 2



The Orlando Sentinel
Sun, Oct 02, 1927 ·Page 11

Baptist Minister Believes He Started Grapefruit Here

Mayo Asked To Urge Use Of Cabbage Palmetto For Wood Alcohol

TALLAHASSEE, Oct. 1.—(AP)—Rev. H. H. Sturgis, a Baptist minister now living at Sanford, believes that it was he who started the grapefruit industry in Florida.

In a letter to Commissioner of Agriculture Nathan Mayo, Mr. Sturgis referred to the industrial survey, now being compiled by the department, and indicated that it would be apropos to record that he had been credited with starting the grapefruit industry.

He also urged the department to exhort the "capitalists of Florida" to utilize their cabbage and saw palmetto in the production of wood alcohol. He relates the circumstances of his "starting" of the grapefruit industry, and his discovery that cabbage and saw palmetto could be turned into wood alcool, which, he declared, "would be better than a gold mine."

The minister told Mr. Mayo that he had come to Florida in 1886 from Alabama. Hs established a pastorate in Hernando county, where, he said, he found "a state of small development, but with immense possibilities.

"In my first pastorate, one of my deacons had an orange grove of 40 acres and some grapefruit trees of immense size loaded with the most beautiful grapefruit," he wrote. "hTe ground was covered with them. I asked him why he did not ship his grapefruit. He replied that nobody would eat them. Even the hogs would not eat them. I told him that I liked them. After several weeks, I persuaded him to let me pack some in boxes. We had no crates then. He replied that if I wanted to waste my time and labor, he would haul them for me. He had four mule teams hauling to Wildwood, 35 miles, making three trips a week over sandy road. I packed three bushel boxes of grapefruit and consigned them to Mr. John Nox of New York, one of the largest commission houses in New York. In sending his returns, he said he had received the boxes of pamelor, or grapefruit, and had obtained 25 cents more for them than for the oranges. I wrote a card and placed in each box telling how to eat them. He said that there had been none seen in New York before, so that started the grapefruit industry."

Mr. Sturgis added that later he saw the immense palmetto forests in Florida, "and wondered what God put them in Florida for." He began to investigate, he said.

"I took some of the saw palmetto which had attained 8 to 10 feet above ground. I took a drawshave and trimmed off the rough bark, cut them in blocks about six inches long, broke down the fibre and with a hackler made by crivving nails in a board, I cleaned out the loose pulp, leaving the fibre standing about 1 1-2 inches. I sawed the blocks in the center taking thereof the blocks and nailing on a block with long thin wire nails."

The trimmings from the palmetto and pulp, the minister said, were saved and placed in an old turpentine barrel, placing the latter under the eaves of his wagon shed.

"I soon had it nearly full, and being under the eaves of the shed, it held a great deal of water. I had one son of about 14 years old when we came to Florida. I got him a gun and ammunition to furnish our larder with game which was plentiful then. My son was fond of sport so I let him do my shooting, and we soon had quite a supply of pelts such as fox squirrel, coons and deer. These I put in the barrel of ooze. After a few months, I found they were entirely tanned. I made a pocket-book out of a squirrel skin."

The minister found both cabbage and palmetto rich in tanic acid and alcohol, he said. He later found a man shredding the boots of cabbage palmetto for fiber for a New York match company, he added, and persuaded him to extract the tanin from the palmetto, reduce it to the specific gravity of honey, and ship it to the tanneries. A few months afterwards, the man was shipping carloads to a tannery at Omaha, Nebr., and was making over 200