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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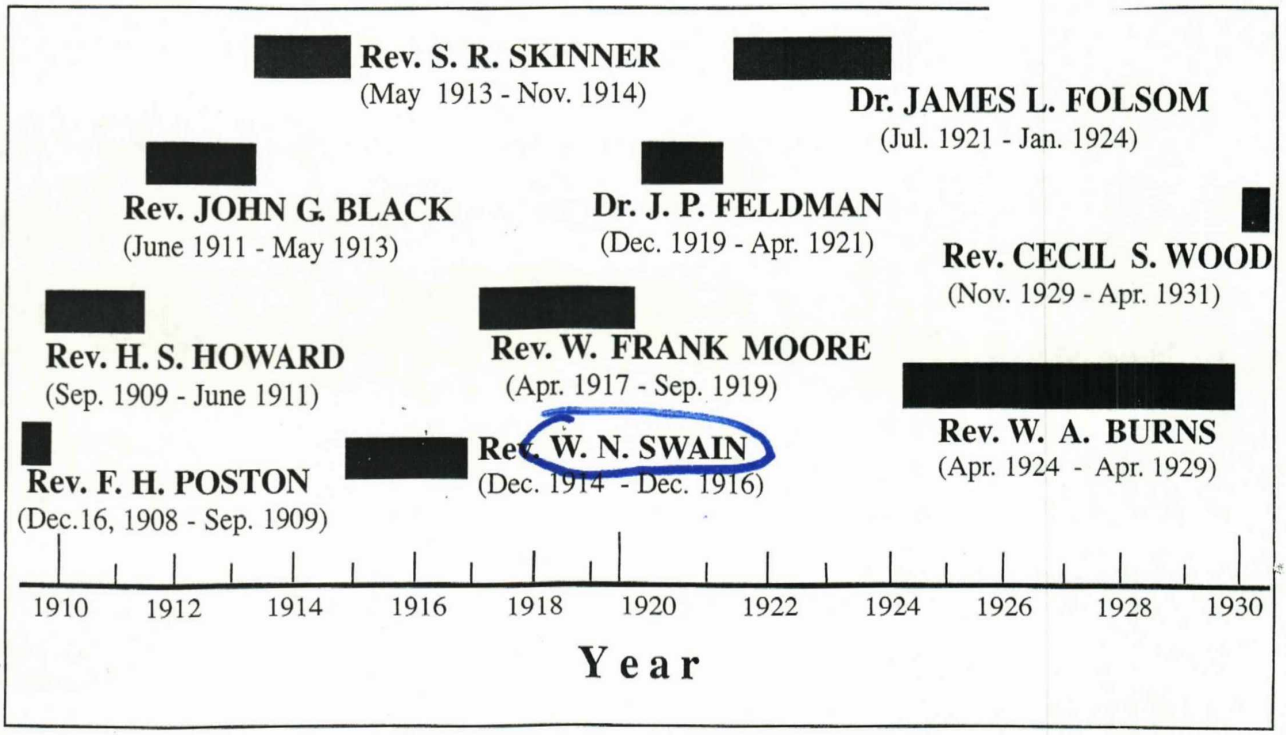
Swain, W. N. (1867-1931) served as pastor of churches in Alabama and Florida including First Baptist Church, Panama City, 1914-1916, First Baptist Church, Punta Gorda, 1922, and Buffalo Avenue Baptist Church, Tampa, 1923-1928. He and his wife, Emma H. Swain had eight children.

Panama City

The Pastors of First Baptist Church

1908 - 1931



1914. E. L. Hudnall, W. F. Segler, and J. M. Sapp were named as the pulpit committee to "negotiate for a pastor for the church."[21] Rev. Skinner remained with the church until November 22, 1914.

Preparation for the Association meeting continued as "R. L. McKenzie, W. F. Segler, and E. L. Hudnall were appointed as a committee to manage and supervise the fish fry in the park during the Association" meeting.[22] (An interesting side note is that the park referred to here would one day be named after R. L. McKenzie.) The West Florida Baptist Association meeting was subsequently held at First Baptist Church in October. The Association included all the churches west of the Apalachicola River and east of the Choctawhatchee River.

On November 22, the pulpit committee recommended that Rev. W. N. Swain be called "to serve the church as pastor upon indefinite terms, it not being known as to what the church could pay." This recommendation was adopted. At this same church conference, "Bro. Skinner, in view of the fact that he was soon to change his field of work, asked for church letters for himself, wife, and son Lawrence."[20] Rev. Skinner preached his final sermon at First Baptist on November 29. He then proceeded to Pensacola to attend the Florida Baptist Convention, thence to his new pastorate at Alachua, Florida.

Even in the face of the uncertainty associated with question of salary due to the financial condition of the church, Rev. Swain accepted the call and began to serve as the full- time pastor as evidenced by the fact he is listed as moderator for the church conference of December 9, 1914.[21] The salary uncertainty was resolved on February 10, 1915, with the "report of the committee on pastorate arrangements to the effect that Bro. Swain could continue as pastor of the church and after the close of his school would give full time for $50.00 per month and what the State Board would contribute per month."[22]

Scattered through the church conference minutes of 1914 and 1915 are mentions of two women's groups playing an increasing role in the church operations: the Ladies Aid Society, and the Women's Missionary Union (WMU). The WMU would become an essential element of the church in the coming years. In April, 1914, "A vote of thanks was extended to the ladies for the $50 contributed by the Ladies Aid Society for church improvement."[23] The Ladies Aid Society officers at that time were Mrs. R. L. McKenzie, president; Mrs. E. H. Brown, vice president; Mrs. A. G. Chandlee, secretary; and, Mrs. O. P. McKenzie, treasurer.[24] In August, a vote of thanks was extended to "Mrs. R. L. McKenzie for her untiring efforts and great liberality in helping improve and build up the church."[25] In November, "Mrs. McCrainie was elected as the delegate from WMU" to attend the upcoming State Convention to convene in Pensacola. She would be joined by two other delegates from the church at large -- J. R. Wells and Mrs. Mayer.[26] In February, 1915, "a vote of thanks was extended to the Ladies Aid Society for settling interest on church loan, $48, insurance of $52, and a small balance due on the park entertainment."[27] Over the coming years, the WMU would emerge as the principal women's organization in the church, eventually absorbing the Ladies Aid Society.

The State Board contribution to the pastor's salary failed to materialize with the result that in November Rev. Swain "asked the church to come to some understanding as to the amount of the pastor's salary for half-time and all fifth Sunday services and prayer meeting services. After due consideration, $40 per month was pledged for the pastor's salary."[28]

Difficulty in maintaining sufficient operating funds represented a chronic condition as demonstrated by the church continually falling behind with the pastor's salary. In December the past due amount for the pastor's salary amounted to $57.47.[29] Again in April of the following year, the past due salary amounted to $50.05.[30] Meeting church expenses was a continuing struggle. For each major expense encountered, a committee of some sort or the other was appointed to raise the necessary funds. This approach was used to raise the funds to install electric lights in the church, to purchase hymnals, and meet other incidental expenses. The Ladies Aid Society regularly raised funds to assist in meeting church expenses.

In December, 1916, when the resignation of Rev. W. N. Swain was accepted, the church membership stood at 109. A pastoral search committee of three persons, with J. Ed Stokes as chairman, was established to obtain a new pastor.[31,32]

Rev. W. Frank Moore was called as pastor in April, 1917.[33]

Over the next four years, church records, other than the church roll, were not maintained on any sort of a regular basis. Only seven church conferences are documented in the period

FBC Panama City

plant that will cost about $75,000. Today they boast of 687 members and are doing a splendid work. In connection with their regular work, they have charge of a live mission. The following ministers have served this church: Revs. J. N. Thompson, S. C. Sloan, J. F. Russell, J. C. Kazee, A. E. Albritton and the present pastor, L. A. Rawls, who is a full-blooded Florida Cracker, but he has held pastorates in Florida and Georgia.

PALM AVENUE

Palm Avenue Baptist Church, Florida. and Palm avenues, was organized February, 1, 1900 with 76 members. The church soon outgrew the original building and in 1912 completed the present church house. The following men have served as pastors: C. H. Nash, W. J. Bolin, A. S. Pettie, J. E. Skinner, W. C. Golden and the incumbent, A. M. Bennett.

During the last three years, under the leadership of Dr. Bennett, the church has had a most marvelous growth.

The membership has increased from 618 to 1,300 and the Sunday school has grown to an enrollment of over 1,500 and several times the attendance has passed the 1,000 mark. More than 1,000 members have been added to the church during the past three years. This church has charge of three missions: The West Tampa Heights, under the direction of Mr. Jack Berry; Main Street, under H. W. Cornett, and Twenty-Second Aavenue, under the leadership of B. F. Bowen. These are located in growing sections of the city and will no doubt soon be churches.

BUFFALO AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Buffalo Avenue Baptist church of this city came into being through the untiring missionary efforts of the Palm Avenue Baptist church, when on March 10th, 1907, a mission was organized on Buffalo Avenue, one block east of Nebraska Avenue.

The first house, a small building, was erected in October, 1916. Up to this time the services of the mission were held under the trees.

On October 24th, 1916, a Council was called to consider the advisability of organizing a permanent church organization.

The Council recommended that a church be organized and a call was made for the presentation of Membership by letter when thrity-six brethren and sisters presented letters to constitute the Charter Membership of the church.

On October 31st, 1916, the church in Conference elected Rev. W. G. Doyle, its first pastor and Bro. S. F. Fisher its first deacon. On November 5th, 1916, Rev. W. G. Doyle preached his first sermon in the Buffalo Avenue Baptist church.

Rev. W. G. Doyle, the first pastor of this church, served faithfully and for two years, presented his resignation in August, 1918, which the church reluctantly accepted.

Bro. Doyle was succeeded by Rev. J. M. Lewis, who continued as pastor for four years, having resigned in September, 1923, to accept the church at Fort Pierce, Florida.

During the pastorate of Bro. Lewis the church outgrew the small building on East Buffalo Avenue and a new location was secured on the corner of Buffalo and Stowell Avenues, where the present building now stands, which has already become inadequate to meet the demands of this rapidly developing section of the city.

In September, 1923, Rev. W. N. Swain was called to the pastorate of this church. Under his ministry the church has had a marvelous growth. Nearly three hundred members have been received, and the finances of the church under the Budget System have more than doubled. Plans have been made for a new modern church building to cost approximately fifty to sixty thousand dollars. This church maintains a thriving mission on the corner of Louisiana and Powell Avenues. Later a mission building will be erected on a lot 100x107 on Louisiana Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets, that was purchased by the City mission board this summer. There are some funds already on hand for the erecting of this building.

The church has a splendid Bible school under the able leadership of Supt. H. C. Stringfellow with an able corps of assistants and teachers. It also maintains an active W. M. U. under the able leadership of Mrs. L. H. Hale. There are in its Auxiliary Organization five B. Y. P. U's. doing splendid work. This church now has a membership of four hundred and fifty, and with wise leadership, it is destined to become one of the leading churches of the city.

THE "WRITTEN" BIBLE

The World's largest Bible, every word of which was written by hand, has just been completed by the Maine Bible Society. The volume, which weighs eighty-eight and one-half pounds, was produced to attract wider attention to the Scriptures. It is the result of the combined efforts of 1,607 persons during the past year.—Ex.

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FINANCIAL SECRETARY

DESIRES TO JOIN ORGANIZATION OF SOME CHURCH THAT NEEDS AN EXPERIENCED MAN TO HELP PUT OVER THEIR FINANCIAL PROGRAMS AS WELL AS DO THE REGULAR ACCOUNTING. WILL DO PERSONAL WORK IN CONNECTION. GOOD REFERENCES.

R. J. BOWDEN,
GENERAL DELIVERY,
SOUTH JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

Peace River 1922

Name of Church	Pastor and P. O. Address	Clerk and P. O. Address	Date Organized	INC By Baptism	By Letter
Alva	W. Ben Davidson, Olga, Fla.	Mrs. L. L. Ramsey, Alva	1921	19	1
Arcadia	Dr. A. J Holt, Arcadia	T. P. Wyatt, Arcadia	1890	69	4
Athens	O. O. Roberts, Ft. Meade,	P. P. Pollard, Ft. Meade	1911		
Bethel	Henry W. Smith, Zolfo	T. W. Albritton, Zolfo	1911		
Bethany	W. C. Miller, Sarasota	E. Corbitt, Verna	1888		
Boca Grande		D. J. Lewis, South Boca Grande	1911		
Bowling Green	S. W. McClelland, Lakeland	W. M. McEwen, Bowling Green	1906	5	2
Brownville	S. L. Albritton, Limestone	H. S. Sjoblom, Arcadia	1919	9	1
Dry Prairie	S. F. Durrance, Zolfo	S. A. Chancey, Ft. Green	1888	19	
Eden		R. L. Martin			
Edgewood	F. W. Nolte, Moore Haven	J. H. Johnson, Ft. Myers	1916	9	
Felda X	W. D. M. Hays, Zolfo	Mrs. E. L. Stallings, Felda	1923	3	
Ft. Green	J. N. Hendry, Wauchula	W. E. Rich, Ft. Green	1917	3	
Ft. Green Springs*		A. E. Abbott, Ft. Green Spgs.	1902		
Ft. Myers	J. A. Ansley, Ft. Myers	J. B. Cox, Ft. Myers		4	2
Ft. Kissimmee*			1911		
Ft. Ogden	N. E. Norwood, Arcadia	L. B. Neese, Ft. Ogden		14	
Gardner	S. L. Albritton, Limestone	C. P. Hartsfield, Gardner	1903	11	1
LaBelle	W. D. M. Hays, Zolfo	R. E. Edwards, LaBelle	1912	2	
Lake Buffum X	C. Vickers, Ft. Meade		1922		
Lake Stearns X	J. L. Moore, Lake Stearns	T. J. Bates, Lake Stearns	1922	2	
Lake View*			1922		
Limestone		A. K. Albritton, Limestone	1915	3	
McCall*			1913		
Mill Creek	W. C. Miller, Bee Ridge	W. O. Edwards, Manatee	1915	1	
Moore Haven		W. E. Daniel, Moore Haven	1917	3	
Mt. Ephraim		Frank Amarine	1884		
Mt. Pleasant		M. R. W. Albritton, Pine Level	1869		
Myakka City*			1885		
New Hope	W. M. McDonald, Plant City	S. L. Griffin, Wauchula	1879		
New Zion	J. N. Hendry	C. H. Roberts, Ona	1866		
Nocatee	P. C. Schillings, Nocatee	Fount Kelly, Nocatee	1892	5	1
Oak Grove		Q. H. Cochran, Wauchula	1895		
Oak Hill		John F. Bates, Arcadia, R. F. D.	1882		
Olga X	W. B. Davidson, Olga	Mrs. L. H. Fitzgerald, Ft. Myers	1923	18	1
Osprey	W. C. Miller, Bee Ridge	V. A. Saunders, Osprey	1910	2	
Ona*			1914		
Punta Gorda	W. N. Swain, Punta Gorda	W. E. Bell, Punta Gorda	1888	6	
Samville X		R. H. Howell, Samville	1923		4
Sandy	B. M. Pack, Myakka City	Mrs. Precilla Johnson, Myakka City	1904		
Sebring	P. T. Taylor, Sebring	Perry Smith, Sebring	1922	2	1
Shady Grove	S. F. Durrance, Zolfo	C. C. Skipper, Zolfo	1897		
Sweetwater*			1902		
Tasmania*			1914		
Union*			1888		
Wauchula	R. J. Mincey, Wauchula	John McEwen, Wauchula	1882	5	3
Zolfo	W. D. M. Hays, Zolfo	E. O. Sawyers, Zolfo	1904	1	1
TOTAL				215	30

* No Report.
X New Church

Arbuckle, Mt. Moriah, Union Grove and Whidden Creek have made no r

The Florida Times-Union
Wed, Apr 08, 1931 ·Page 16

afternoon at 220 East Monroe Street.

Rev. W. N. Swain Is Victim of Accident; Former Tampa Pastor

By Staff Correspondent.

TAMPA, April 7.—Funeral services were held this afternoon for the Rev. W. N. Swain, 64, former pastor of Buffalo Avenue Baptist Church here, who died last night as the result of injuries received when he was struck by an auto late Sunday night.

The Rev. Mr. Swain had retired from the active ministry several years ago but acted as a supply on occasion. The car that struck him was driven by Miss Mary Gooding of this city. Death was due to a skull fracture and other injuries. Miss Gooding was held on a charge of reckless driving. The accident occurred at a busy crossing on Grand Central Avenue.

The Rev. Mr. Swain is survived by his widow, four daughters, four sons, and one sister.

TALLAHASSEE, Apri
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"3. That conscientic
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"4. That each majo
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of the States."

The Tampa Times
Mon, Aug 23, 1926 ·Page 2

REV. W. N. SWAIN QUITS PASTORATE

Veteran to Retire After 40-Year Service.

The Rev. W. N. Swain has tendered his resignation as pastor of the Buffalo Avenue Baptist church, he announced today. The resignation becomes effective Oct. 3.

With a record of 40 years service in the ministry, with only one short vacation, Mr. Swain stated that he will retire to take a needed rest. His plans for the future are indefinite, although later he probably will take a small church where the work is not too heavy, he said.

Mr. Swain has been pastor of the Buffalo Avenue Baptist church for three years.



The Tampa Times
Tue, Apr 07, 1931 · Page 9

AUTO ACCIDENT WOUNDS FATAL TO REV. SWAIN

Funeral Services to Be Held This Afternoon.

Funeral services for Rev. W. N. Swain, 64, former pastor at the Buffalo Avenue Baptist church, who died yesterday from injuries received when he was struck by an automobile here Sunday night, will be held at 3:30 o'clock this afternoon. The services, held from the Greenman-company's funeral home, will be under the direction of Rev. W. P. Head, of the Spencer Memorial Baptist church, assisted by a group of pastors from other Baptist churches in the city.

Rev. Swain died at the municipal hospital yesterday without regaining consciousness after having been struck down at Grand Central and Brevard avenues by an automobile driven by Miss Mary Gooding, 4501 North B street. Death was due to a fractured skull, with probable internal injuries.

Miss Gooding, held by police on a charge of reckless driving, pending the outcome of Rev. Swain's condition, was released to Justice of the Peace J. Mack Cathcart, who said his investigation showed the accident to have been unavoidable. Miss Gooding, Cathcart said, was driving about 20 miles an hour when she struck Swain, who was crossing the intersection to go to a drug store. He lived at 800 Grand Central avenue.

Rev. Swain, who was pastor of several churches in Alabama, was pastor of the Buffalo Avenue Baptist church here from 1923 to 1928, when he was forced to retire because of ill health.

Besides his widow, Mrs. Emma H. Swain, he is survived by four daughters, Miss Mary Swain, Mrs. Roy Winham, and Mrs. Raymond Kelley, of Tampa, and Mrs. Frank W. Roberts, of Birmingham; four sons, Edward, of Tampa; Robert S. and James G. Swain, of Birmingham, and Henry L. Swain, of Tuscaloosa, Ala., and a sister, Mrs. Myrtle Ferguson, of Myrtle, Miss.