

Looking Backward Into Fayette County History

(By Lester C. Dickson)

On February 6th, 1849, Rowland Stubbs made a deed to one and one-fourth acres of land for "a meeting house," in land lot 246, fourth district, which was located just east of Inman, to Elisha Hill, James Hightower, Moze Harp and Thomas Turner, as trustees, and later in 1853 he made a deed to another acre to the trustees, at that time, namely: Elisha Hill, James C. Hightower, Moze Harp, A. W. Gray and William S. Chambers. There was built a church which was known as Liberty Chapel Church, which has grown into one of the strongest Methodist churches in the county. Some years ago the church was moved to Inman where it is now located

We are indebted to Mrs. Will. Harp for a history of this church which was prepared and read by her at the home-coming of this church in June 1930, and which we are using in this week's article.

On the 6th day of February, 1849, Uncle Roland Stubbs gave one and one-fourth acres of land on which to build a meeting house, as it was called in the deed. This building was made of logs and was in a grove of oak trees across the road from where our cemetery now lies. The trustees of the church were Elisha Hill, Jas. Hightower, Moze Harp and Thomas Turner.

This was a very popular church and during revivals in the summer a brush arbor was built in front of the old church to accommodate the crowds of people who came from miles around to attend the services. The young people came on horseback and the older ones in carriages and wagons.

No record of the pastors of this church has been found, but we know that they were real circuit riders, and that their churches were far apart. One pastor, Rev. Alfred Dorman, is known to have preached here.

In December, 1853, another acre of land was obtained and long before the Civil War a new church was built across the road from the old one. Two new trustees were added, namely: A. W. Gray and William Chambers.

In this building the pulpit was not placed against the wall, but a space was left back of it for the negroes (then slaves) to sit in. The white people sat on the sides and in front. The pastor lived in Fayetteville and served several other churches. In those days they sometimes had preaching during the week and especially on Saturday. This was no occasion for dress and the people often came in their working clothes. The men would stop plowing, strip the gear off the mule and ride to church. There was no stove or means of heating this building so they had no Sunday school except in spring and summer, but the preaching services were well attended, both summer and winter

Day schools were scarce and many people were taught to read the Bible at Sunday school, who would have had no other opportunity to learn. The "blue-back" was also taught by the Sunday school teacher.

There were many local preachers and "exhorters", as they were called, who went in pairs and had regular appointments on Sundays. Some of these older ones were Uncle Jimmie Hightower, Moze Harp, and Ephriam Sweat. Nobody prayed louder or shut his eyes tighter than Uncle Jimmie Hightower.

In those days no one thought of putting flowers in front of the pulpit or in the church, but in summer the ladies would bring large bouquets of flowers and sit with them in their laps during the service.

The first pastor on record is W. W. McIntosh in 1883. After him came J. R. Smith, B. Sanders, Aubrey and Thomas.

It was a common thing for members to be tried for misconduct. Often they were dismissed from the church. Many of them were afterwards reinstated.

About 1890 Inman was taken off the Fayetteville charge and the inman circuit formed. This circuit

consisted of Inman, Brooks, County Line and New Hope for many years.

For years there was preaching every Sunday in the month, the local preacher filling the pulpit except on the pastor's Sunday. Uncle Daniel McLucas, Bogon Mask and Jno. Elder had regular appointments.

Many of us remember how happy some of the members used to get during revivals. Especially Uncle Joe and Aunt Nancy Banks. How they used to shout.

The Sunday school at this time was well attended and interesting. There was a large Bible class and many of the older members were regular attendants.

Later people who served the old church were C. M. Verdel, C. S. Wright, S. W. Thomas, W. C. Davis, N. E. McBroyer, B. E. Timmons, J. W. Bailey, J. S. Askew, A. E. Scott, R. P. Tatum, J. S. Hill, C. D. Read and J. R. Jones.

In 1912 our new church was built at Inman under the leadership of A. W. Conway, a good man who has gone to his reward. The logs were given by some of the members, others cut, hauled and sawed them into lumber. Mr. Reeves gave them the use of his mill. Of course carpenters were hired, and some of the material had to be bought. To meet this expense we had a "home-coming Day", the 4th Sunday in November, 1924, and raised the money to clean the church of debt.

The women had a cotton patch and did other work to raise money. With this they painted the church, bought the bell, etc.

Our pastors in the new church since Bro. Conway have been W. E. Brown, Z. Speer, J. R. Terrell, J. S. Askew, W. R. Williams and J. C. Callaway.

(Written for "home-coming" June 22, 1930.)