



Rented Mission Building - 1918



New Wooden Sanctuary - 1926



West Side Baptist Church - 1994

The Sixty-fifth Anniversary of

WEST SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

154 Gordon Avenue, Hamilton, Ohio 45013
Telephone No. (513) 893-2403

Organized September 8, 1929

1918

1929

1994

Pastors of the First Baptist Church
in early years of the
Gordon Avenue Baptist Chapel and West Side Baptist Church

American Baptist Convention

B.F.

Caudill

September 1, 1919

to

October 8, 1922

George H.

Young

January 7, 1923

to

February 13, 1924



John S. Brinkman
September 31, 1928
Died, 1949

Harry

Drake

April 14, 1918

to

April 14, 1919

Frank G.

Sayers

April 1, 1925

to

July 29, 1928

*Hand to
Ida A Betscher
in trust for the
Gordon Avenue Aid Society*

A G R E E M E N T .

This Agreement, made and entered into at Hamilton, Ohio, this 7th day of December, 1923, by and between Donco Co., Inc., hereinafter referred to as Party First and The Gordon Avenue Aid Society by Ida A. Betscher, President, and Lucy Lunsford, Vice-President, hereinafter referred to as Party Second, witnesses:-

Party First has sold and agreed to convey to Party Second by a good and sufficient deed of general warranty, the following described real estate, to wit:

The west twenty (20) feet of Lot No. 14957, entire Lot No. 14956, and the east ten (10) feet of Lot No. 14955, making a total frontage of sixty feet on Gordon Avenue, in the City of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio,

for which said Party Second agrees to pay to Party First the sum of Eight Hundred (\$800.00) Dollars, in the following manner, to wit:- \$550.00 cash at the signing of this agreement, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, and the sum of \$15.00 per month during each and every calendar month thereafter until said sum of \$800.00 shall have been fully paid, with interest at the rate of Six Per Cent. (6%) per annum upon deferred payments thereof, all payments to be applied and credited, first in settlement of accrued interest (and of taxes and assessments against said premises if any shall be allowed to become delinquent) and then in reduction of principal.

Said Party Second shall have immediate possession of said premises.

When said Party Second shall have paid said sum of \$800.00 of purchase money in full, together with interest on deferred payments thereof as herein provided, then Party First agrees to execute and deliver to Party Second a deed for said premises.

Attest:
H. B. Krauth
E. J. Black

DONCO CO. INC.
By *H. B. Krauth*
Agent.

THE GORDON AVENUE AID SOCIETY
By *Ida A. Betscher*
President.

And *Lucy Lunsford*
Vice-President.

THIS AGREEMENT by and between the Trustees of The First Baptist Church, of Hamilton, Ohio, and Gordon Avenue Aid Society, of Hamilton, Ohio, witnesseth: -

That the Gordon Avenue Aid Society agrees to deed to the Trustees of said Church, the following described real estate, to-wit:-

A strip of ground twenty (20) feet in width taken uniformly the entire length off of the west side of inlot No. 14957; entire lot No. 14956, and a strip of ground ten (10) feet in width taken uniformly the entire length off the east side of inlot No. 14955, as said lots are known and designated on the revised list of lots in the First Ward of the City of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio; the same having a frontage of sixty (60) feet on Gordon Avenue and extending back northwardly of uniform width to the public alley.

and said Trustees agree that except as hereinafter provided, they will hold and use said lots for Church or mission purposes only and that they will erect a suitable building thereon in the ~~year~~ of 1926.

YEAR

Said Trustees further agree that in the event that said lots are abandoned for Church purposes and the property sold that the proceeds of the sale of said property shall not be used for the general purposes of said First Baptist Church, but shall be used only for the purchase, or to apply on the purchase, of another site and building for Church purposes in the First Ward of the City of Hamilton, Ohio.

In the event that an independent of said First Baptist Church should be built in the First Ward of the City of Hamilton, Ohio, and should said Trustees of The First Baptist Church, of Hamilton, Ohio, their successors or assigns, so desire, said Trustees are hereby authorized to transfer and convey said property to such ~~independent~~ Church.

Baptist

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have hereunto set their hands this day of February, A. D., 1926.

Signed *By Gordon Ave. Aid Society*
~~in the presence of:~~

AGREEMENT OF PURCHASE
BETWEEN GORDON AVENUE AID
SOCIETY AND FIRST BAPTIST



West Side Baptist Church, 1950



Former Parsonage,
412 Cleveland Avenue

The Old Store Building
Corner Hunter and Webster Ave.



A
HISTORY
of the
WEST SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

**A
History
of the
West Side Baptist Church
of
Hamilton, Ohio**

**Organized
September 8, 1929**

by the History Committee

Mahala J. O'Keefe-Roades
George Roades
Chester Buckner, Historian

Affiliated With:

Southwestern Baptist Association
State Convention of Baptists in Ohio
Southern Baptist Convention

R 286.177175 O CMR 3970
O'Keefe-Roades, Mahala ~~1991~~ 1994
A history of the West Side
Baptist Church of Hamilton,
REFERENCE--DOES NOT CIRC.

FIRST EDITION, 1991 for Hamilton's Bicentennial
Unpublished; typed copies given to Chamber of Commerce
and Southwestern Baptist Association

SECOND EDITION, 1994
Documentarian : Chester Buckner

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Bibliography.

LIBRARY of CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER: 94-72558

Camera Ready Manuscript Prepared by: Mahala J. O'Keefe-Roades
on a Macintosh Centris 610 Computer and printed on a
Hewlett Packard Desk Writer 550C

The Font Type is Times

Photo Credits :

Mission Building 1918 and New Sanctuary 1926, courtesy of
Joyce Tillery
West Side Baptist Church 1994, courtesy of
George Roades

Printing and Binding by
American Printing & Lithographing Co., Inc.
Hamilton, Ohio 45011

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have preeminence”.

Colossians 1:18 (KJV)

DEDICATION

This history is dedicated to the memory of those who have gone on before; to those whose consistent efforts led to the formation of the West Side Baptist Church; to those who have been faithful to God with their attendance and support and who even now wait until in God's time they will be called into positions of leadership.

But most important, this history is dedicated to the Almighty God whose Spirit guided in all actions that led to the organization of this church.

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Acknowledgements

To those who kept the minutes for Gordon Avenue Baptist Chapel and West Side over the years; to Marlene Clark who searched the records in 1991 and retrieved events and happening of the past that affected the growth of the church; a work that was very difficult to perform, our thanks.

A word of appreciation for the many people who gave the History Committee letters, pictures, documents, went to the Records Office, contributed information in any way, gave notes and newspaper articles that served to fill-in the gaps in the history; to Jake Garrett for the letter from Rev. H. H. Welch's daughter Jane Welch Schlihr, which had information for Rev. Welch's biography; to Mrs. Margaret Harris for the History of Immanuel Baptist Church and a letter about her mother, Lucy Lunsford, a charter member whose work on behalf of West Side went back to 1918.

To Mrs. Joyce Tillery, Clerk of Immanuel Baptist Church, for documents and pictures; to Kathy Reynolds for the History of First Baptist Church 1846 to 1936; to Mrs. Juanita Gruner for a copy of a brief history of Columbia Baptist Church, 1790, now Hyde Park Baptist Church; to Dr. Donald W. Gillis and Pat Ingram for the loan of books from the Association.

Gratitude is expressed to Ruby Buckner for unflinching support during the preparation of this history, for her help in proofreading and checking for errors in grammar; to Haley and George Roades for reviewing all records given them, from as early as 1920 and histories that go back to the beginning, 1918. It was necessary at times to go back over these records several times to clear up conflicting information. An effort has been made to be as accurate as humanly possible. This history would not have been possible in its final form had it not been for Haley and George Roades.

History Committee:

Mahala J. O'Keefe-Roades
George Roades
Chester Buckner, Historian

Preface

The records of West Side Baptist Church have information that dates as far back as 1918. From these records, the History Committee has developed an acceptable history. All information can be traced back to the minutes, notes, bulletins, histories of other churches, mailouts, etc., which are on file.

But the question came to mind, "How did all this come about, where did things start, who began the march to Ohio?" A background study has been prepared from many sources. These sources are listed in the Appendix under Bibliography.

This study traces the effects of the Prevailing Spirit of God as He moved Christian men and women, including preachers of the Gospel, into Southwestern Ohio. Many pastors have exerted great influence in the Kentucky and Southwestern Ohio areas, but for the purposes of this study a narrower approach has been taken. From a great number of books on the Baptists, no one name is more visible and traceable than that of Rev. John Gano. He had two sons; John S. and Stephen. Stephen Gano appears on the stage of history only briefly. This special interest is important because, while the father went to Kentucky, the two sons came and ministered in Southwestern Ohio.

An effort has been made to conform as much as possible to the established publishing norms found in the Chicago Manual of Style. A serious study is no place for humor, but perhaps for this one exception, so West Side can laugh at its self!

A written history must allow the reader to follow the events as quickly as possible. To do so, some events or happenings could be omitted that seem important or familiar today, but not to tomorrow's reader. Lists of names, committees, detailed organizational reports and other details not written into this history can best be covered in future extensive searches. Important items that were overlooked can be included in the next history update in a separate preface.

West Side Baptist Church didn't just happen, it was brought to fruition by honest and sincere prayer, and through the Guidance of the Holy Spirit. After a series of extended prayer meetings, that lasted all through the night, the First Baptist Church asked the Philathea Class to assume the responsibility of starting a mission on the west side of Hamilton. The rest is history.

From across the Ohio River men came looking for work, brought their families and many settled in the area. These people were found by the faithful women, who still had a vision in their hearts. Was it just a coincidence that it happened that way? No, God knew they were coming and prepared a place for them.

An Anniversary Celebration can be a high point of the year, one that causes us to look back to the accomplishments of those who have gone on before us.

It can also be a time of reflection, to realize that the same Compelling Spirit of God who led the generation of the past is now expecting the same faithfulness from this generation.

In John 12:32 Jesus says :

"And I if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Chester Buckner

CHAPTER 1

A Background Study

The history of Baptist in America began in 1638 when Roger Williams and eleven others formed the First Baptist Church in Providence, Rhode Island. Early Baptist leaders include William Screven, John Clarke, William Penn, Daniel Marshall, Shubael Stearnes, Morgan Edwards, John Gano, Isaacs Backus, and John Leland.

Baptists from England and Wales continued to migrate to the New World to escape the persecution of the Kings, James I and Charles I. However, the persecutors were already there. Only in Pennsylvania was there a welcome for all suffering Christians, and the Baptists grew and began to meet quarterly. ¹

Since there was a large group of Baptists in Philadelphia it was natural that in 1707, the Philadelphia Baptist Association was organized. Rev. John Gano (1797 - 1798) was employed as an Itinerant Missionary, and he made extensive preaching tours in the south. Upon his return, Rev. Gano, in 1762, became the pastor of the first Baptist Church organized in New York City. ²

He was pastor for 26 years, though he made several extensive preaching tours starting churches in several states. During this time he also spent eight years as General Washington's Chaplain in the American Revolution.³ The American Revolution and War of Independence lasted from 1763 - 1783. Because of his long absences, the church discontinued services. After the War he soon brought it back to its original size. Rev. John Gano had two sons; John S. Gano (1762 - 1787) and Stephen Gano.

At the age of 60, Elder Gano left the city and traveled to Kentucky. ⁴ Rev. Gano arrived in Kentucky in 1787, landing at Washington.

Later he went to Lexington, and then to Frankfort. He was active in the Elkhorn Baptist Association. Rev. John Gano, very much respected in the Association, died in August 1804. ⁵ (Other histories have his birth at 1727 and his death at 1798, there is no mention of the place of death)

The Northwest Ordinance was adopted July 13, 1787 by the Continental Congress, and this made effective the Ordinance of 1784, drafted by Jefferson. It opened up the land north of the Ohio River, know as the Northwest Territory. The Ordinance guaranteed freedom of religion, support of schools and no slavery. This was of particular interest to Baptists because of restricted freedom of religion in the colonies. ⁶ The Congregational Church had control in the north, and the Angleton Church has control in the south. Only the middle colonies had any freedom of religion.

The Constitution Convention opened May 14, 1787, at Philadelphia and George Washington was chosen President. (Presiding officer) The Government did not declare the Constitution in effect until March 4, 1789. The City of Losantiville was founded December 28, 1788. It was later changed to Cincinnati, after the Society of Cincinnati, composed of retired Revolutionary Army Officers.

Benjamin Stites, a Trader and former Revolutionary War Veteran, came by flatboat down the Ohio River to Limestone, (Maysville) Kentucky with a load of supplies for the small settlement. He either formed or joined a posse to pursue a group of Indians that had stolen horses from a band of backwoodsmen. They went by flatboat; didn't find the Indians but Benjamin Stites did observe the lay of the land along the river between the Little Miami and

Chapter 1
A Background Study

the Great Miami Rivers. Upon returning north he made contact with Judge Cleves Symmes and told him what he had seen. Judge Symmes was a former Delegate from Delaware to the Continental Congress in 1785 - 1786, Judge of Superior Court of New Jersey and afterwards, Chief Justice of the same state. Being a cautious man, Judge Symmes made a trip down the Ohio River himself, was pleased, and petitioned Congress for a grant of all the land between the Miamis. The men did not wait for formal approval; the Judge sold Benjamin Stites 10,000 acres for 5 shillings per acre.

(Congress approved the grant May, 1792 giving Symmes the whole Ohio River front between the two Miamis.)

Benjamin Stites immediately set out on November 16, 1788 with 25 hardy companions from Limestone (Maysville), Kentucky. On November 18, 1788 the flatboat landed at the mouth of the Little Miami River where they cleared some land and kneeling on the ground thanked God for a safe trip. In this little group of serious and religious people were several more than ordinary men: Benjamin Stites, John S. Gano, Edmund Buxton, and Greenbright Bailey; all Baptists. Other Baptists in the group were Mrs. Mary Bailey and Thomas Wade.⁷

The little settlement was named Columbia, and later Stephen Gano who served as a surgeon in General Washington's Revolutionary Army, came to visit his brother and helped organize the first Baptist church in Ohio, Columbia Baptist Church, on January 20, 1790. John S. Gano was appointed clerk and his brother, Stephen Gano, agreed to preach until a pastor was found. John Smith became pastor and served from 1792 to 1796.

A church building was approved for construction in 1792 and was opened for services in 1793. Columbia Baptist Church was the first Baptist church west of the Allegheny Mountains, and in the Northwest Territory as the area was known at the time. It was located

in the Old Columbia Cemetery, it was a two story building, the lower floor was used for worship services and the upper floor, directly over the lower floor was used as a lookout for hostile Indians. This was a necessity because in 1793 two church members were killed by the Indians.

The little town of Columbia was subject to spring flooding from the Little Miami and the Ohio Rivers. In March 1805, there was an extraordinary flood. People began to move from the flat valley to higher ground and the church lost some of its members. Because of the flooding, the Columbia Baptist Church, in 1808, decided to move to a new location at Duck Creek and Edwards Road. In 1827 the name was changed to Duck Creek Baptist Church.

The church moved again in 1875 to Mt. Lookout and remained there for 29 years. The next move was to Hyde Park, Ohio, a permanent location. The name was changed to Hyde Park Baptist Church. Of the many missions started by this church over the years the Muddy Creek Baptist Church, 1810, was helpful to those Christians who eventually organized the First Baptist Church of Hamilton, Ohio.⁸

When Columbia Baptist Church finished their church building, in 1792 or 1793, or ?, (no specific dates are mentioned) a missionary went out to preach the Gospel and organize churches in Hamilton, Warren and Butler Counties, Ohio.

It took courage to travel in Ohio during this time. Continued attacks on settlements north of the Ohio River by Indians, armed by the British, led Washington to send General Arthur St. Clair and General Wilkerson to the area with 1400 men. General St. Clair was surprised near Wabash on November 4, 1791 and lost 600 men. Fort Hamilton was founded September 30, 1791. Land in the area was taken up by soldiers and speculators almost before the last stroke of the quill was made on the Ordinance of 1787.

Indians lurked around Fort Hamilton from 1790