

Hopkins Co. Tx - History of Stouts Creek Baptist Church

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History of Stouts Creek Church

By W. H. Arthur - Saltillo, Texas

Gazette - 1937

The nearest church to Saltillo was about two and a half miles northwest of the old town of Saltillo, near where Stouts Creek Baptist Church is now. This church was built about 1846, and was located about 150 yards south of west of (sic) the present building. The house was built out of round logs and the cracks in he walls were chinked and daubed with post oak dirt or clay to keep out the cold wind and rain. This building had a dirt floor and the seats were made of split logs, smoothed off with a broad-ax. The logs or seats were supported by round pegs for legs. The doors were made of nich (sic) plank, hung on wooden hinges. The hinges had to be greased to keep them from screaming (sic.) This building was heated by a stick and dirt chimney. The clay was reinforced with grass. This was the only kind of chimney used then; brick chimneys were not known. Glass windows were unknown then and wooden shutters were used instead. The tallow light was used for lighting. This light was made by folding many times a wick or string and putting this in a vessel of earthenware such as a saucer and letting the wick extend over the edge of the receptacle about one inch. Then hot tallow was poured into the vessel, covering the wick and when the tallow was cold the wick could be lighted and the light would draw the tallow like a light does the oil from a lamp. As the wick burned off more could be pulled from the tallow and that is one reason the wick was folded so much. The other reason was to have a more absorbing surface on the wick to absorb the tallow.

This church was not a regular organized church until about the sixties, but was an "arm," we think, out of Sulphur Springs Baptist Church. By an "arm" is meant there were not enough members to constitute a regular church and some regular organized church gave them the privilege to hold meetings and accept members. As we understand it, the foster church was held responsible for the actions of the "arm." In the sixties the first building was abandoned and a plank building was constructed. Then this became a regular, organized Baptist church, responsible for its own acts. This building was about 50 yards north of west of the present building and was lighted with candles. The third church was built in the early eighties and was situated between the second church and the church now. This church was a large building, with a steep roof and was constructed by Bob Bennett who was head carpenter. The seats in the church now were made when the third church was built. Several years later a storm damaged the building and it became necessary to remodel it. The fifth church was built about 1908-09 and the same year a Baptist church was built at New Saltillo by former members of Stouts Creek Church, who had withdrawn from Stouts Creek Church for the purpose. In 1904, a cyclone destroyed the home John Jennings, the church secretary, and blew the church records away. It was then necessary to make a church record from memory. The

pastors of the "arm" are unknown to us, but the first pastor of the regular organized church was Alex Tolbert of South Franklin County, then Titus County, who was the forefather of most all the Tolberts of Franklin County, many of whom still live in the county.

We do not know how long Tolbert preached, but later Colonel Josh Johnson was called as pastor, but he could not come right then so Bro. Christian of Sulphur Springs preached until Bro. Johnson would come. Bro. Johnson was the first legislator from Franklin County when it was organized and introduced the first prohibition bill in the State Legislature. The next pastor was a man named Abbott who had moved into the community from Arkansas. He was called as pastor, preached one Sunday and placed his letter in the church. The next meeting day he preached and asked for his letter. This left the people wondering, but later they found out that he had another wife in Arkansas and he wanted to get his letter before his congregation found it out. Brother Brooks, a young man from Arkansas, and who married Tom L. Bennett's daughter, succeeded. Abbott. An unusual thing about this man was that he was called to preach before he was converted under the preaching of a Baptist preacher named Compton in Arkansas. Brooks preached 15 years in succession at Stouts Creek Church. Brother Banty was next called as pastor and served for two years. Brother Brooks was then called again and preached three years more. Brother Selvege of Mt. Vernon was then called as pastor for some time because they could not get any one to preach for them on their regular preaching day, which was the first Sunday of each month. Uncle Joe Smith had an appointment there for a while but was not a regular pastor. Brother Mathews of Winfield was then called and preached several years. He was succeeded by Brother Gorman of Winnsboro who preached for one year and was succeeded by Brother Bilup of Winnsboro who preached for two years. Brother Lowry was next called as pastor and served for 17 years, being recalled as pastor several times. Brother Bird Day, Brother Isaac Davis, Brother Ray, Brother Rozell, Brother C. C. Courson and Brother Perry Griffith, the last pastor, each served the church nobly and faithfully. Probably others served the church but we are unable to think of them just now.

Brother Allen Thornton and Brother Perry Griffith, two men reared in this church, have been licensed to preach by it. Others not reared in this church but licensed to preach by it include Brother R. W. Lowery and Brother Joe Smith.

Stout Creek Church and cemetery are the oldest in this section of the country. The name of the first person buried in the cemetery is unknown but was probably one of the Bennetts. The church itself was at one time called "Bennetts Church" because of the large number of Bennetts living in the community and their activity in the church.

The church territory at one time extended from near Mt. Vernon, near Dike, west of Weaver, Pine Forest, Greenwood near Purley, Union and Mahoney. The following Baptist churches have been organized in this territory: Mahoney, Weaver, Pine Forest, Willow Springs, Greenwood, Purley, Union, and New Saltillo. These churches directly or indirectly are considered offsprings from the Stouts Creek Baptist Church because they have been organized in its territory.

A wonderful work has come from this church. In fact, more than from any one other church we know of. Memorial Day at Stouts Creek Church is always Wednesday after the first Monday in August.