

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church
Chesapeake, Ohio
INTRODUCTION

By Ronnie Wolfe

It is with pleasure that I present this short work to the members of the Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church. Brother Wilmot Snell and his lovely wife Lenore (now in Glory) have taken their precious time to put together a brief history of this church. This is a noble undertaking; and because of it the members of this church can look back at their heritage and have in hand a concise reference to the progress of this church through the years.

Following their fine history I have endeavored to take the minutes of the church and glean from them some of the more outstanding events in our history to bring up-to-date the history of our church. You may not like all that you read in this history, but by reading this history we can see the different stages that our church went through, and we can meet some of the people who have made this church what it is today. We are thankful that God has seen this fine church through many trials through the ages, and we pray that He will continue us as in the past and make this church to be a lighthouse in this community and around the nation of the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the precious doctrines that we hold dear.

Special thanks should go to Bro. Bill Shore, who donated the use of his typesetting and layout facilities for me to use in this work. Otherwise, this would have been typewritten, but because of his generosity we are able to have a typeset version of this small history of Mt. Pleasant.

May we take this history, the Declaration of Faith, and the Church Covenant home with us and digest its content that we may have an even more glorious future for our church, for it will all too soon be history, and our children will be able to look back over these present years and thank God for their Baptist heritage. If you are a reader of this short history and are not a member of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, we extend to you a cordial invitation to visit us often and to consider the contents of this little manual. We invite you to trust the Lord as personal Saviour if you have not already done so; and if you have, we invite your inquiries as to the possibility of perhaps joining us in the service of the Lord. The pastor will be more than happy to talk with you about any spiritual need you may have.

HISTORY OF
MT. PLEASANT MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

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To illuminate that corridor which runs sixty-two years into our church past we have a magic torch—the proceedings of by-gone business meetings. By its light let us walk in spirit back down the years to the beginning of the nineteenth century and let us listen in on those first business meetings of our organization.

We take you now for a short visit to a few of those early business meetings of the Submissive Baptists, as the church was then called. You will meet such outstanding preachers as Henley Webb, J. H. Willis, and many others.

The first church building was on Buffalo Creek, near the present site of the school house. The building was later sold to a Methodist congregation, and the Submissive Baptists rented a church building from a Campbellite congregation on Tallow Ridge, to be used until a new building could be erected. Revival services, lasting three weeks, were held November, 1890. The number of members at the beginning of the revival was ten. New members were added, some by letter, some by experience, others by baptism, including W. A. Snell, J. D. Foster, and other outstanding members. Revival was conducted by the first pastor, Bro. J. H. Willis and Assistant Pastor, Bro. J. H. Webb.

It is noteworthy that the Submissive Baptist Church believed in democracy in church government. We quote from the first church minutes recorded after the church moved to Tallow Ridge December 6, 1890:

The Submissive Baptist Church met as per appointment on Saturday, December 6, at 2 PM. After divine services by Rev. Henley Webb, the church was called to order with Rev. Webb in the chair. W. E. Beckett was appointed Assistant Clerk. The Declaration of Faith and church Covenant was read to the church. The peace of the church was called for. All present in peace. The church Clerk, Bro. Abednego Baise, accordingly voted that W. C. Beckett fill the office. The question of the selection of a pastor was discussed, and a committee consisting of A. B. Baise, G. W. Pemberton, and Jas. Bruce was selected to arrange for the election. Adjourned to meet on Saturday before the first Sabbath in January, 1891, at 10 o'clock AM. Paid Pastor \$3.73.

Rev. H. Webb, Moderator

W. C. Beckett, Clerk

December 18, 1890

The committee called for the election of a pastor December 8, at 7 PM, which resulted in the selection of Rev. J. H. Willis with Rev. Henley Webb,

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Assistant. A. D. Baise was also elected Treasurer. Pastor's salary fixed at \$40.00.

Rev. J. H. Willis, Moderator

W. C. Beckett, Clerk

At the next business meeting, January 3, 1891, the church voted to adopt a new name at the next regular meeting, also to notify persons who desired the privilege of proposing a new name to present them to the church at that time. At the regular business meeting on January 31, 1891, the church agreed by vote to give the pastor the privilege of selecting a name. He accordingly, on account of

locality, proposed that the church be called Tallow Ridge, which was adopted by the church.

At a business meeting July 2, 1892, a committee was appointed to select a site for a new building, and the ground was donated by a deacon, Bro. Taylor Hagerman. A building committee was appointed and reported that the Submissive building was again for sale and suggested the purchase of it, and on August 6, 1892, committee reported that the Submissive building had been purchased for \$100.00 and was being rebuilt and work was progressing nicely. On September 3, 1892, the committee reported the building nearly Completed and church voted and held dedication services on September 18, the Lord's Day.

Elder J. M. Kelly preached the dedicatory sermon, prayer was by the pastor, Bro. J. H. Willis. An offering of \$112.00 was given.
October 1, 1892

A letter was read from the corresponding secretary of the Ohio Baptist Convention, asking for a contribution. An offering of \$1.25 was given. At this meeting the church voted to change the name from Tallow Ridge to Mount Pleasant. Novembers, 1892

The building committee made the following report: Amount of work contributed toward new building, \$270.75. Amount of money expended, \$450.40. Total cost of house, \$721.15. Church voted to receive the report of committee and that they be discharged.

We noted that the church was very strict as to conduct of her members. Each year a committee was appointed to contact unruly members; and if a favorable report was not received, the hand of fellowship was withdrawn. At each business session the Pastor called for the peace of the church, and anyone not voting in peace was asked to state their reason.

On April 6, 1895, N. D. Crowe and wife were received by letter from Ice Creek Baptist Church. On July 6, 1895, W. A. Snell was

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elected a trustee, holding that office for 49 years. He also was church treasurer, Sunday School teacher, and Superintendent at various times. On February 1, 1896, N. D. Crowe was elected Church Clerk and served in that capacity for 40 years. On July 2, 1898, he was ordained a deacon and served 38 years. On November 16, 1895 the church elected Rev. J. H. Webb Pastor until December 4, 1897, when the church elected J. C. Dillon, who served until 1903. The church voted that each member pay three cents annually to the Baptist Minister's home. On March 4, 1899, Sister Nan Huff was elected Sexton at \$9.00 per year.

The following is an item taken from the *Ironton Baptist Monthly*, published at Ironton, Ohio:

November, 1896

Our church is in very good condition but not what we would like it to be. Rev. J. H. Webb has been a faithful pastor the past year, and the church appreciates his services. He has been chosen for another year. The young people and children are

taking great interest in our Sunday School lessons. Rev. Webb preached a good sermon November 1 from these words, "not as pleasing men, but God."

- Harriet...

One of the interesting events in the early history of our church was the purchase of a new bell. We were very happy about it and when the belfry was completed, the bell was hung on a Thanksgiving Day and special services were held.

Sunday morning at Mt. Pleasant was more than a religious gathering. People went to church more generally then. Through snow or blow, rain or shine, they went to church, driving for miles with horse and buggy and on horseback. Arriving at the church, the women folks usually went inside while the men gathered out under the trees to exchange their news and views until the bell called them to service. Church service might well be over an hour before the last carriage left the vicinity, for this social hour was the one chance of all the week to learn of the health and fortunes of one's neighbor.

The birth of a baby, the death and marriage of adults were all important events in the church. But it must be remembered that the major emphasis at Mt. Pleasant was the preaching of the Gospel and the salvation of the lost.

Each winter on a date selected by the church, the pastor would begin a revival or a "protracted meeting," as it was then called. These services would continue for a period of four to six weeks with preaching both in the morning and evening. People came from miles to attend these revivals, and the house would be filled. The hills would echo and re-echo as the people sang hymn after hymn

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of the praises of God. Throughout the years many were saved and added to the church as the result of the Gospel being preached.

The thread of missionary zeal weaves its way down through the history of the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. We find records of missionary support to the Ohio Association and Convention in early years, and Baptist Faith Missions and the Southern Baptist Convention in later years.

Homecoming Sunday was another great occasion. Mt. Pleasant was known far and wide for its warm-hearted friendliness and hospitality. Many of the former members that had moved away always came back for Homecoming. A sermon was preached both in the forenoon and afternoon, and the brethren were reminded of God's love and care for them during the past year. Homecoming Sunday usually fell during the month of August or September when the hay and small grain were harvested and the corn just beginning to turn. Then, too, the coming season was at its height, and the first fryers big enough for the skillet. Nature was at its bountiful best. Preaching in the afternoon was a difficult task. It took a really dedicated minister to keep a sleepy farmer used to physical activity awake after he was filled with chicken and cake. The wives usually solved the problem by sitting with their husbands during the afternoon services. Whenever they dozed, they gave them a not-too-gentle jab. After all, they reasoned, if the women went to all the trouble of preparing the dinner, the men should at least be able to keep awake during the service.

God has richly blessed our church down through the years with many virtuous women. We would make special mention concerning Sister Eliza Bowen, now deceased, who taught a primary class for 25 years and held the office of Church Treasurer for nearly as many years, also Sister Mary Kates, at one time our oldest active member, having been a member of the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church for 55 years and teaching children's classes for 38 years.

To the Godly women of our church we dedicate the following poem:

The Builder

*A builder builded a temple;
He wrought it with care and skill -
Pillars and groins and arches,
All fashioned to work his will.
And men said, as they saw its beauty,
"It shall never know decay;
Great is thy skill, O builder,
Thy fame shall endure for aye."*

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*A mother builded a temple
With infinite loving care,
Planning each arch with patience,
Laying each stone with a prayer.
None praised her unceasing effort.
None knew her wondrous plan;
For the temple the mother builded
Was unseen by the eye of man.
Gone is the builder's temple -
Crumbled into dust;
Low lies each stately pillar,
Food for consuming rust.
But the temple the mother builded
Will last, while the ages roll,
For that beautiful unseen temple
Was a child's immortal soul.*

For many years Bro. N. D. Crowe was the only deacon. After his death, the church remained without deacons for several years. In June, 1943, during the pastorate of Bro. A. C. Jenkins, the church voted to ask the pastors of the Ohio Association to assist them in ordaining three deacons. The following is a record of that ordination service:

June 20, 1943

Meeting called to order by S. J. Dillon, organized by electing Bro. Dillon Moderator, Olaf Jenkins Clerk, and Bro. Chas. McKnight Catechizer. Bro. Wilmont Snell, Bro. Max Pemberton, and Bro. Lon Bellomy were set before the council and after satisfactory relation of experience in conversion and examination, were duly ordained by unanimous consent of the council to serve as

deacons of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. Bro. Clifford Suiter was chosen to deliver the ordaining sermon and the charge to the church and candidates. Bro. Dillon gave the ordaining prayer.

Olaf L Jenkins, Clerk

I think it only fitting that we pause in the history of our church to pay tribute to our loyal Baptist forefathers from whom we received so great a heritage. Sorrows descend upon us so often; yet our faith and the promise of the resurrection and the immortality of the soul helps us to bear our losses. We may look forward to a reunion in a better and brighter world where death holds no sting. Life's eventide becomes a beautiful sunset envisioning the glorious day hereafter. So we must remember our departed members not as dead but that they have gone on before us to that home above

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whose kind deeds and great teachings still live on in the hearts of their loved ones.

On December 24, 1944, the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church voted to call Bro. T. P. Simmons as a full-time pastor, he being the first full-time pastor in the history of the church. At the very beginning of his pastorate the church began to think of moving its location in order to be more accessible to the congregation. It was on January 14, 1945, that Mt. Pleasant voted to move location to some place other than Tallow Ridge. At this time a building committee was appointed to select a site and make plans for the erection of a new building. This committee consisted of T. P. Simmons, Chairman, W. B. Snell, Max Pemberton, and Lon Bellamy. Later, L. D. Gibson and Harry Milem were added.

On February 11 of the same year the site where the building now stands was accepted with thanks as a gift from the late C. H. Pemberton. Also at that time it was decided that the total offering on the first Sunday of each month should go into the building fund until the new building was erected and paid off. The first offering to the building fund came on March 4, 1945. It resulted in an offering of \$200.87. We have had one on the first Sunday of every month since. On March 10, 1946, the church voted to move its place of worship from the old building on Tallow Ridge to the Buffalo schoolhouse and that the old building be torn down and the material be used in the construction of a new building. At that time it was voted to revise the church roll, and a letter and card was sent to each name on the church roll. Twenty-six of these cards were returned, and their names entered on the new roll.

At a business meeting on May 19, 1946, the church voted to extend an invitation to evangelist J. S. Thompson to hold a revival to begin in June. The church was blessed with a great revival. Twenty-two persons professed faith in Christ and were baptized into the church.

Another important date in connection with our building program was July 4, 1945, for it was on this date that the first ground was broken in grading the site of the building. We were delayed in erecting our building at almost every turn. When we launched our building program we expected to complete our building in the summer of 1945; but God willed otherwise, and His delays are all concerned in grace and brought forth in wisdom. Our disappointments are his appointments.

It was not until January, 1947, that the building was near enough completion to permit occupancy. It was with much joy that we announced services for the first time to be held on Sunday, January 6, 1947, and special services to continue throughout the

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week with a visiting speaker each night. On Sunday we had a record attendance, and Bro. Simmons brought a wonderful message. His subject was: "Ebenezer — Hitherto Hath The Lord Helped Us." His text was I Samuel 7:12.

Bro. Simmons continued as pastor of the new church until July 1, 1949. During Bro. Simmons' ministry Bro. John Felty, Bro. Ralph E. Webb, and Bro. Don Pemberton each held revival meetings for the church, with souls being saved and our membership steadily increasing.

On February 5, 1950, the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church called Bro. Richard Miller as pastor. Many progressive steps were also taken during Bro. Miller's pastorate. The pastor's salary was increased to \$150 per month. The church rented a parsonage, and the pastor lived on the field for the first time in the church's history. The Sunday School rooms were added to the basement of the church. At the business meeting of July 4, 1951, the Mt. Pleasant Church unanimously voted to make request for membership in the Greenup Association. This request was granted at their associational meeting at Fairview Baptist Church, Ashland, Kentucky, August 29-30, 1951.

During Bro. Miller's pastorate, Bro. W. K. Wood held a revival with our church, and the church was revived, souls were saved, and members added to our church by letter and baptism. Bro. Bert Caldwell also held a revival for our church, and through the preaching of God's word and the drawing of the Holy Spirit, our membership increased from the original twenty-six members to ninety.

On Sunday, March 2, 1952, Bro. J. Marvin Moore was called to Mt. Pleasant to serve as her pastor. Under his leadership the church building was paid free from debt, and the Sunday School rooms in the basement have been completed and furnished. The Sunday School classes have been graded by ages and are now using the rooms.

The church auditorium has been completely redecorated, and venetian blinds were installed as a gift from the Ladies Bible Class. Also a committee was selected to purchase new pews for the auditorium. At a business meeting on May 21, 1952, the church voted to purchase the late Chas. Lynd home for a church parsonage, and Bro. Moore had the honor as the first pastor to live in the church-owned parsonage.

Today it is with pleasure and gratitude that we acknowledge that people outside our membership have contributed to our building fund and have given a very substantial amount. We sincerely hope that all of these will avail themselves of

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the ministry of the church and thus realize some immediate returns for their liberality.

There has been no taking of pledges and no soliciting of funds. Our financial plan has been and will continue to be just this: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

As we look back on these years of church history, we say with the poet of old:

Through many dangers, toils and snares

We have already come.

Tis Grace that leads us safe thus far

And Grace will lead us home.



[Written and compiled by Wilmot and Lenore Snell.]