

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Thursday Morning, October 4, 1990

The Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists convened in its 138th annual session with Blackwater Lick "Big Door" Church, Blackwater, Virginia.

On September 27, 1847, in a hollow behind the present home of Roy and Edith Robinette Roop, in a still house was organized Blackwater Lick Primitive Baptist Church.

This was probably the most unique founding of a church ever recorded. A man built a distillery and operated it on the Major Livingstone plantation near the Blackwater Salt Works, thus the word "Lick". The good people protested so hotly and consistently that he finally left for a more peaceful community. They threw out the still tubs and met in the building several times before they actually organized the church.

They did not use this house long, but built a large log church house about one-half mile southwest of the present building site on a farm now owned by the late Oren Robinette's heirs.

During the Civil War (four years) there were no services in the old church because all the men, including the preachers, were in service in the Confederate Army. During the latter part of the war, a band of Union soliders came through Blackwater and stayed in the old church one night. They used the big fireplace located at one end of the building to cook their meals and the next morning there was a pile of ashes where the church had stood. The people were not bitter about it and thought it was probably an accident.

A short time after the war, they built a large log church on a lot (present site) deeded the Primitive Baptist by Elder Isaac Robinette. This old log church building served as a place of worship, a school and sometimes for political meetings. The late Senator Lloyd M. Robinette received his education there along with many other scholars who went on to become teachers, doctors and preachers.

The first pastor was Elder Isaac Robinette. Some others that followed were: Elders E. S. McPherson, E. A. Robinette, Dan Bowen, G. B. Wallin, Joe Wallen, Harrison Burke, Jessee Peters, Nicholas Alder, Pleas Jenkins, W. S. Osborne, John Henry Sybert, Hobart Hall, Freeman Johnson, Alex Willis, Bryan Moore, Brote Johnson and Carl Lawson the present pastor.

In 1906 a new two story building was erected at the same site. The upper story housed the Odd Fellow and Masonic halls. The two story building served the people until 1960 when a new block building was erected. A few years later the outside of the building was bricked and the inside paneled. In 1971 a new kitchen building was added as the church hosted

the association.

The church is better known as "Big Door". This name came from the second log building which had an unusually large door. It was about 3 1/2 feet wide. This name stayed with the church and today most people refer to it by this name rather than the name it was organized under.

God has richly blessed the generations of people who have attended here over the years. It has endured from the Spanish American war through Vietnam and many other troubled times and thanks be to God it remains an organization unmoveable. We thank God for those saints who went this way before us, for what they stood for and the guidance they gave us. Most of all we thank God for meeting here with us, and pray that He will continue to do so until time is no more.

We wish to express our appreciation to Sister Edith Roop and Brother Earl Johnson for their help in the preparation of the church history.

As God's people gathered, the heavens were opened not only with God's wonderful Spirit, but with a downpour of rain. Even though the natural surroundings were wet, God's Spirit was not dampened in the least. Elder Bobby Williams led the congregation in singing several old hymns. As His Spirit touched the hearts of His people, shouts of praise were heard throughout the congregation. Once again it proved to us that nothing can really dampen God's Spirit in His children.

A special prayer request for Elders Corbit Bowen, J. D. Maggard and Clarence Miller was made. Joy in the presence of Elders Lucian Lane, Bryan Moore, Freeman Thacker, and Henry Wheeler after recent illnesses was also expressed. A request for the lost everywhere was made as Elder Hasco Jenkins lead us to the throne of grace.

The moderator appointed the Committee on Religious Exercises. The committee includes: Ralph Baker (chairman), Myrel Brown, and Jack Osborne.

The moderator led the congregation in singing the old hymn written by Elder I. S. Robinette, "Brethren We Have Met Again".

Elder Carl Lawson, pastor of the host church, welcomed the association and asked that everyone obey the Spirit of God that the Lord's will be done. Having been chosen to preach the introductory sermon, Elder Lawson continued on with the reading of St. Matthew 12:41-42 taking as his text "*A greater than Jonas is here, a greater than Solomon is here*". We must keep our minds and our thoughts turned toward God, for if we fail to do this, trouble may befall us. Elder Walter Willis, the alternate, followed. Truly one far greater than Jonas, Solomon, or any other is here with us. We thank Him for His presence and His continuous watchcare over His people.

Adjourned for lunch.

Thursday afternoon, October 4, 1990

After a wonderful meal served by the host church, the congregation came together with singing. Ernest Davis, a visiting minister from Morristown, Tennessee, led us in singing "Amazing Grace". Elder J. H. Sybert, moderator of the association, led the congregation in singing "How Firm a Foundation".

Prayer was requested for Wanda Bell, Jack Arnold and Randall Pruitt. A special request was made for the unsaved, that they might realize their lost condition. Many uplifted hands signifying unspoken requests were raised just before Elder A. D. Howington led us in prayer.

Brother Kenneth Mitchell, chairman of the Committee on Church Letters, now reports 66 churches which they recommend accepting. It was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendations of the committee and seat those delegates duly elected or appointed by their respective churches as the voting body of the association.

Elder J. H. Sybert spoke to the association concerning last year's request that they begin praying about a new moderator. As several had asked him to reconsider this request, he graciously agreed to accept the nomination if it pleased the body.

It was motioned, seconded and voted for Elder Bobby Williams to serve as moderator pro-tem for the election of the association officials. Since he was not feeling well at the time, the motion was withdrawn and it was motioned, seconded and voted for Elder Basil Freeman to serve as moderator pro-tem for these proceedings.

It was motioned, seconded and voted for Brother Danny Lawson to serve as clerk and treasurer.

It was motioned, seconded and voted for Elder J. H. Sybert to serve as moderator.

Elder Sybert thanked the delegation for their prayers and support over the years and asked them to continue praying for him now, more than ever. The clerk thanked the delegation for their confidence in him and their prayers and help throughout the year. He also thanked Brother Burnice Sybert and Sister June Sybert for the wonderful job they have done over the 18 years that Burnice served as clerk and treasurer, not to mention all the help he has provided during the past year.

It was motioned, seconded and voted for the moderator to appoint any and all committees. The moderator then appointed the following committees:

Committee on Obituaries: Roger Trent (chairman), Terry Sizemore and Bill LaFollette.

Committee on Finance: Silas Carroll (chairman), Jim Jarnigan and