

LEGACY, as the monthly newsletter of the Florida Baptist Historical Society, has as its mission to highlight the *legacy* forged by the people, churches and events in Florida Baptist history. During the next several months this newsletter will feature those churches and their leadership who between 1821 and 1849 contributed to the development of the Florida Baptist State Convention. Each monthly issue will feature at least one church established in the 1820s, 1830s and the 1840s respectively. **While dozens of Baptist churches were established during these decades, most have not survived time. The featured churches continue to function in 2020.**

Florida Territory Missionary Baptist Churches Established in the 1820s

We have concluded narratives on all the known churches organized in the 1820s that continue to function in 2020

Florida Territory Missionary Baptist Churches Established in the 1830s

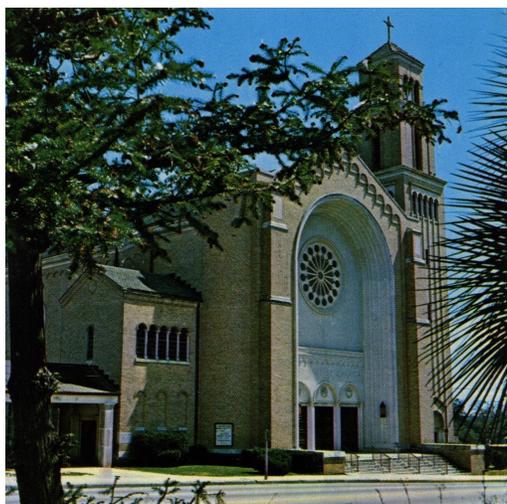
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Florida Territory Missionary Baptist Churches Established in the 1840s

Pensacola: First Baptist Church -- 1847

On Sunday, May 2, 1847, the First Baptist Church was organized as the "Pensacola Baptist Church of Christ" by itinerant missionaries Elders (Reverends) Alexander Travis and Joseph Mitchell. The two men, who had been commissioned by the Bethlehem (Alabama) Baptist Domestic Missionary Society to establish churches in the western portion of the Florida Territory, served as the constituting presbytery.

The seven charter members were Aaron and Mary Hendrix, Henry and Jane Maulder, Joseph and Jane Steele, and W. L. Jamison. Within a short time, the congregation was composed of 123 Anglos, including 50 men and 73 women, as well as a group of 24 African-



descendant men and 98 women. During the first four years, Elders Travis and Mitchell alternately travelled to Pensacola to provide preaching services.

Five years after its organization (1852), the church changed its name and became incorporated as the Pensacola Baptist Church. In the same year the church constructed its first permanent building on East Government Street near Seville Square. It was a small, one-room, frame house of worship. Subsequently, in 1894-95, under the leadership of then pastor A. P. Pugh, the church built its present-day sanctuary, located on Palafox at LaRue streets. In 1870 the church voted to adopt as its name, the First Baptist Church, Pensacola. In the year 2020 the church observes its 173rd anniversary of ministry.

Apalachicola: First (formerly Calvary) Baptist Church – 1848

On December 18, 1848, a Baptist church was organized in Apalachicola by itinerant preachers Elders (Reverends) Thomas J. Bowen of Gadsden County and John R. Jones of Jackson County. The church was constituted with ten charter members -- three Anglos and seven African-descendant slaves -- all of whose names have been lost to history. Rev. Jones returned regularly to lead the worship services and conduct baptismal services in the nearby bay. It was reported to the Georgia Baptist newspaper,

The Christian Index, that the first baptism held by the Apalachicola church attracted between five to six hundred people. Also, on that same night of the baptism event, the first Lord's Supper was observed by the newly organized church's members. Among the newly baptized was a converted Jewish woman who prepared the bread and wine for the Lord's Supper ordinance. She reportedly followed Hebrew tradition for the preparation of the bread and wine in the same manner as was used for the Passover observance.



The church was called the Baptist Church at Apalachicola until 1885 when the members adopted the name Calvary Baptist Church. In 1934, the church members agreed to officially rename the church as the First Baptist Church, Apalachicola. The church constructed its first wooden sanctuary in 1850 on the corner of Sixth Street and Avenue H.

This series on early churches concludes next month