

DID YOU KNOW THAT IN...

- 1732-33 That James Edward Oglethorpe and his fellow trustees were granted a royal charter for the Province of Georgia between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers on June 9, 1732. Many new settlers consisted of English tradesmen, artisans, and religious refugees from Switzerland and Germany. It is a historical fact that Baptists came over in the same ship with Oglethorpe when he settled the province in 1733 according to William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, 1881; rpt., 1988 pp 441-445.
- 1757 The first accounts of the appearance of Baptists in Georgia.
- 1772 The first Baptist church constituted in Georgia was the Anabaptist Church on the Kioka in the county of Richmond. Information derived from John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, Vol 2, 1926; rpt, pp 209-212.
- 1776 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
- 1777 Liberty County was created.
- 1784 The first Baptist Association, known as the Georgia Baptist Association, was formed in the State, probably at Kiokee church. At that time there were but six Baptist churches in Georgia, and it is probable that the following were the original constituent churches of the body: Kiokee, Red Creek (now Abilene), Little Brier Creek, Fishing Creek, and Upton's Creek. To these were added next year Phillip's Mills and Whatley's Mills (now Bethesda). Information derived from John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, Vol 2, 1926; rpt, pp 209-212.
- 1802 The Upper Black Creek Primitive Baptist Church was constituted in Bryan County (the area now designated in Bulloch County). It is likely that members of the Upper Black Creek Primitive Baptist Church sent out members to constitute Beard's Creek Baptist Church in an area that is now in Tattnall County.
- 1803 The Savannah River Baptist Association was organized. There were now five Baptist Associations in the State.
- 1804 Beard's Creek Baptist Church was constituted.
- 1810 Jones Creek Baptist Church was constituted by members who were sent out from Beards Creek Baptist Church for this purpose.
- 1830 Worship services were held under a brush arbor for many years. Rev. Edward Quarterman Andrews (b.1800- d.1880), a Methodist Minister, used Exodus 15:27 as his text for the first sermon ever preached on the parcel of ground where this church is located. *Information derived from "History of Elim Baptist Church" written by M. A. Murray.*

- 1857 Members of Jones Creek Baptist Church left the church to organize **Elim Baptist Church**.

Members of the first congregation of Elim Baptist Church lived in the areas located in parts of McIntosh county and in parts of Liberty county. The boundaries of the two counties shifted in small amounts of land by a number of legislative acts during the years 1794 and 1871.

In the late 1800's, the Allen's Mill Pond was the scene of many Baptist baptisms.

- 1857 Train Depots were built at McIntosh, Walthourville, and Ludowici (Johnstons Station) for the Savannah, Albany and Gulf Railroad.
- 1862 That Elim Baptist Church participated with other Liberty county churches and the Soldiers Tract Association to provide Bibles, prayer books, and other religious material for members of the Confederate



Army. A "concert of prayers" was offered during the Christmas season for all members of the Confederate Army. (*Information from Sweet Land of Liberty, A History of Liberty County, Georgia, by Robert Long Groover*)

1866 Elim Baptist Church is a member of the New Sunbury Baptist Association. They met for the first time on November 24, 1866. The New Sunbury Association was made up of seventeen churches (14 are listed):

- Crescent Baptist Church - organized in 1950
- Darien Baptist Church - organized in 1794 - 1863, reorganized 1934
- Elim Baptist Church - organized in 1857
- Fleming Baptist Church - organized in 1913
- Gum Branch Baptist Church - organized in 1833
- Hinesville Baptist Church - organized in 1937
- Jones Creek Baptist Church - organized in 1810
- Ludowici First Baptist Church - organized in 1883 as Bethlehem Baptist, renamed in 1947
- Midway Baptist Chapel - organized in 1960
- South Newport Church - organized between 1800-1821 called the Harris Neck Church
- Shellman Bluff Baptist Church - organized in 1946
- Townsend Baptist Church - organized in 1922
- Walthourville Baptist Church - was organized in 1809 as The North Newport Baptist Church, moved to Walthourville in 1854, and moved to its present location in 1923. In 1953, the name was changed.
- West Side Baptist Church - organized in 1953 as the First Baptist Church to its present name.

1875 Four women offered their egg monies to start a church building fund.

- Mrs. Pauline Parker McGowan (1848-1902),
wife of Joseph Edward McGowan (1851-1907);
- Mrs. Harriet Amanda Hodges Wheeler (1848-1882),
1st wife of James Ferman Wheeler (1837- after 1910);
- Mrs. Margaret C. (Robinson) Fennell Way (1834-1913),
wife of John E. Way (1832-1922); and
- Mrs. Alice Devereaux Way (1860-1955),
wife of William Byron "B" Way (1858-1934).

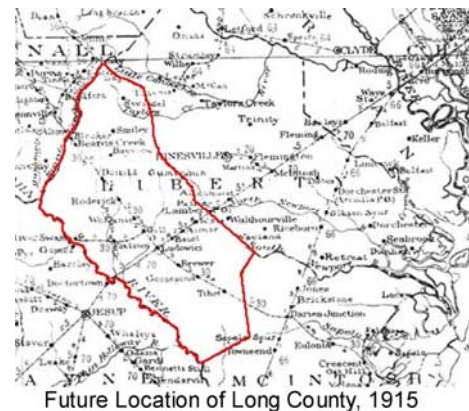
1889 From about 1889 to 1952 (during the time the community had "no fence laws"), that when it rained during the Sunday service, the goats in the area would crowd under the church, bleat and bump the floorboards during the service.

1890 That on February 2, the women organized the Women's Missionary Society of Elim Baptist Church.

1895 Sunday School Superintendents from Elim Baptist Church and Gum Branch Baptist Church proposed to organize a Baptist Sunday School Association in Liberty County, GA. It was organized in July 1895. The association's purpose was to assist in the development of Sunday School work. This work continued into the 1930's.

1905 The Georgia, Coast and Piedmont Railroad was started that traveled through Ludowici to Darien and Tattnall county. The acronym GCP was known locally as "Gopher, Coon, and Possum."

1920 Long County was established (formed from Liberty & McIntosh counties). (see picture)



1923 M. Archie Murray was licensed to preach the Gospel. He was ordained in 1928 by the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Mason.

1929 In a call conference on Sunday, Feb 3rd, 1929, the church body moved and carried to appoint a committee to solicit funds to erect a monument in the cemetery in honor of the deceased Jack Way, giver of church property. A later conference opened and a motion made and carried to accept eight dollars as payment for timber sold off church property and same be used for purchase of monument for the deceased giver of church property.

- 1932** Opening of State Highway 38 (presently Highway 84). Until this time, Elim Church Road was the main thoroughfare from Ludowici to Hinesville. In order to get to Jesup, you had to take the train.
- 1934** In the depression years, 1934, it was necessary to sell the beautiful pine trees which stood in front of the church, in order to get the roofing to cover the church building, that was leaking and the roof was unsafe due to rotten shingles.
- 1938** Berger E. Howard was licensed to preach the Gospel. He was ordained in 1939.
- 1943** The church was painted in July. The cost of paint was \$141.00 and the cost of labor was \$245.00. In addition, the church body raised the pastor's salary to \$35.00 a month for two Sunday services. Later in the year, the church body voted and approved to raise the pastor's salary to \$50.00 a month for two Sunday services.
- 1945** The funeral homes began hiring people to dig the graves for interments at Elim Cemetery. Prior to 1945, the graves were dug by the men of the church. Mrs. Monnie B. Baker Johnston, granddaughter of Brother George Washington McGowan (1875-1955), remembers her grandfather saying that "he helped dig half of the graves in the cemetery."
- 1947** That the ups and downs of a farmer's life were steeped deeply into the history of the church. For nearly a hundred years of the church's history, the fellowship was mostly farmers. There was at one time a drought in South Georgia so severe that announcements went out from the churches in the Long county area that on Thursday everyone was invited to Elim Baptist Church for the specific purpose to pray for rain. Brother Armand was a young teenager at the time and he remembers that Brother Dowse Smith led off with the first prayer. Then throughout the crowd, men with humble hearts and prayerful attitudes prayed to God to send rain. God answered their prayers. It rained so hard that evening and throughout the night that Armand had to ride his bicycle to the three tobacco barns he was attending in order to relight the fires.
- 1949** Around this time is when the church first got electricity.
- 1952** That Elim Baptist Church gained a full-time pastor instead of sharing the pastor with a number of local churches. Prior years, Elim Baptist Church would hold Sunday School services every Sunday. Preaching by an ordained minister occurred every other Sunday of the month. On the fifth Sunday, there would be Sunday school and a "fifth Sunday sing" but no preaching. If there were services on those Sundays when there was no ordained minister, then a lay person would lead the congregation. Elim Church's strong Sunday School foundation was being built during those decades when the Sunday School Superintendent directed the lessons. Armand Ray, Mary Everett, and Monnie B. Baker Johnston remember memorizing their scripture verse, knowing that after Sunday School classes, the congregation would gather for the Sunday School Superintendent to call on every Sunday School teacher and their students for each class to recite their scripture verse from memory.
- 1953** Shirley Middleton was licensed to preach the Gospel. He was ordained in 1954.
- 1957** Elim Baptist Church had four living deacons! They were Harold Howard, Armand Ray, Frank Coleman and Arnold Shaw. Arnold Shaw was also treasurer of the church. The Pastor Billy R. Barker was paid \$300 a month. He was paid by the week. If the donations did not cover his weekly salary, Brother Arnold would visit the deacons to collect what was needed to pay the preacher's salary.
- 1963** The record of the organization and the constitution of the Woman's Missionary Society, Elim Church, Liberty County, dated Feb 2, 1890, was found in an old Bible of Jerry L. Shaw generation and was given to the church on Jan 20, 1963 by Mary McGowan Everett, granddaughter of Jerry L. Shaw.
- 1966** Elim Church road was paved.

After the new ceilings were put in the sanctuary and the two pot-bellied stoves replaced as the source of heat for the church, the chance of red wasps falling from the attic into the laps and down the collars of the members of the congregation was a thing of the past. Brother Armand admitted that part of the chore of stoking the pot-bellied stoves (one located on each side of the church sanctuary) with wood, also included climbing into the attic to exterminate the wasp nests. The half-crazed red wasps could compete with a half-crazed Mississippi squirrel to put a church back on the narrow way.

1970 In the 1970's, four women of the church re-enacted the contribution of a dozen eggs from the pioneer women that started the first building fund.

The church finally got indoor plumbing!

1975 Radio broadcast of services were on WSOJ Radio, Jesup, GA, every Sunday from 5:00-5:30 p.m.

The Youth were responsible for the 5th Sunday services.

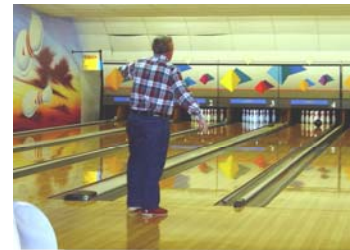
Michael Howard was licensed to preach the Gospel. He was ordained in 1985 at Bethany Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri.

1977 Jack Yarbrough was licensed to preach the Gospel. He was ordained in August 1980 by Elim.

1978 Spring Revival services were broadcasted on WSOJ Radio, Jesup, GA.

Jacob B. Wheeler (1844-1864) of Liberty County, Member of the 5th Georgia Cavalry, Co. D., was killed while defending his country, August 1864. He was a noble and brave Confederate Soldier. His remains and monument, which was erected by the Memorial Society of Panthersville on Jul 1895, were moved from the Atlanta area to Elim Cemetery to make way for an Interstate Highway in Atlanta. Services were held December 17, 1978 for his reburial. Jacob was the son of Reverend Jacob Wheeler (1808-1864) and Mary. He was 20 years old when he was killed.

1981 That members of Elim Baptist Church entered the Community Church Bowling League. The Community Church Bowling League is made up of members from the local churches in the area who meet once a week during the season to bowl and have fun. The league continues today.



Steven Smith
2007

1987 Elim Baptist Church organized and sponsored the first basketball and softball teams to enter into the Long County Recreation Department league.

1992 Lightening struck the church sign and it crumbled to pieces.



Church Sign Before
the Lightening Strike

Picture Taken in 1992



Church Sign After
the Lightening Strike

Picture Taken in 1992

1992 That the tradition of putting a "love offering" into the birthday bank (a small ceramic church-shaped container) on the Sunday of your birthday week slipped gradually to the wayside. For several decades, the Sunday congregation sang "happy birthday" to those persons whom they noticed walking to the front of the church to drop in their contribution into the birthday bank. Armand Ray and Annette Abbey fondly remember that on their birthday, there were usually three of them laughing together as they walked up the aisle. The two of them and James "Shorty" Wilkinson all shared the same birthday. It was Mrs. Virginia, Shorty's wife, who donated the little ceramic church container for the purpose of celebrating birthdays. Prior to using the ceramic church container for collecting the love offering, there was a larger



wooden miniature church house for this purpose. The money that was collected was gathered into the general fund.

1994 Larry Strickland was licensed to preach the Gospel. He was ordained by Elim in October 1994. He accepted the call to pastor Crescent Baptist Church.

1997 On August 24th, we celebrated “Byron Ray Day” in Sunday school. He had been the Sunday School Director for ten years.

2001 Le Gibson was licensed to preach the Gospel and ordained by Elim.

2003 Elim Baptist Church entered the technology age with multi-media system.

160 families at Elim Baptist Church were photographed for the pictorial directory.

2004 Elim Baptist Church entered the world-wide web with a website at www.elimbc.com.