

# PIONEER BAPTIST CHURCH RECORDS

OF  
SOUTH CENTRAL KENTUCKY AND THE UPPER CUMBERLAND

OF TN  
1799-1899

Malinda Lashley  
Alma Dicus  
Lillie Hazelip  
Massy L. Edwards  
Bertha J. Hazelip  
Bertha M. Alexander  
Mary E. Carrier  
Received on Credit of letter:  
S.B. Lindsey  
Mary J. Stice  
Sopha E. Brooks  
R.R. Alexander  
Alonzo Hazelip  
A.W. Webb  
E.W. Edwards

Alice Hazelip  
James M. Webb  
Rice Webb  
J.A. Morris  
Received by relation:  
J.P. Reed  
J.W. Lashley  
Louisa Lashley  
Received by restoration:  
Nora Lindsey  
Mary A. Garner  
Elizabeth Skaggs  
Kate Green  
??? Johnson

Eld. B.F. Page, moderator  
J.C. Dossey, clerk

## History of Holly Springs Baptist Church (Edmonson County, Kentucky)

In January 1803, Rev. Jacob Locke traveled from Mt. Tabor in Barren County to Beaver Dam Creek at Rhoda and helped constitute the first organized religious body in what is now Edmonson County, Kentucky. The church took its name from the stream which flowed nearby. There was, however, no organized church north of Green River in Edmonson County for several more years.<sup>29</sup>

In 1825, Edmonson County was the seventy-ninth county in order of formation in the state. Prior to this, the vast territory, north of Green River and west of Nolin River was the southern part of Grayson County, which had been formed from Ohio and Hardin Counties in 1810.

Except for occasional visits by the pioneer preachers from Beaver Dam Church, the population in this isolated region was destitute of any organized religious society for many years. This is not to say that there were no Christians in that area during this period of time, but those who wished to affiliate themselves with an organized body had to ford Green River and travel to Beaver Dam or go north to Rock Creek in Grayson County, where a Baptist Church was formed in 1802.



The majority of the best people were not church members, and it was not fashionable at that time, or even fifty years later, to belong to the church, just as it is now not so fashionable not to belong to some church organization. It required a man of much physical and moral courage to preach in such a community, and in some neighborhoods great physical strength was also regarded as a valuable asset.

It was said of Rev. Thomas Downs, an old minister in the Green River country that . . . "he raised a large family of children, and was so extremely poor that he had to do much of his traveling on foot, and often barefoot. Many a time, he ploughed hard five days in the week, and then walked from Green Brier to Rock Spring, a distance of 25 miles, and preached two hours, shoeless and coatless; sometimes to but few hearers, and once, to only three sisters. Such was the labor and lot of this consecrated servant of Christ."<sup>30</sup>

The population of this back country steadily increased after 1800, mostly by movement by overland immigration from Virginia and North Carolina.

Martin H. Webb, pioneer ancestor of the Webb's of Edmonson County, received land grants from Hardin County totaling 400 acres along Indian Creek, and the larger streams of Nolin and Green Rivers.

Also taking up land in this vicinity was Phillip Jones and his younger brother James, who had come to America from Wales as young men just prior to the American Revolution. Both served in the Continental Army. After the war, both settled in Greenwood, South Carolina, where they married. About 1800 both brought their families to North Carolina and then to the Green River country of Kentucky. Phillip Jones had married Nancy Webb and had five sons and three daughters: Jesse, Phillip, Martin, Rev. John, James, Mary, Sarah, and a daughter who married George Woolsey.<sup>31</sup>

William Lindsey, another early pioneer who settled on the head of Indian Creek, came to Edmonson County from North Carolina, and married Sarah Logan, daughter of Squire M.M. Logan (grandfather of U.S. Senator M.M. Logan). After Sarah died, William married Anna Music. William and Anna were the parents of Rev. Caleb Lindsey.<sup>32</sup>

By 1817, the members of Beaver Dam Church who lived north of Green River, had become sufficiently strong enough to be organized into a religious body of their own. On the 3rd Saturday in July 1817, the following was recorded in the old Beaver Dam Church book:

"Ordered that the members named in a petition from the north side of Green River be dismissed from this church on condition the presbytery when met think them in order for constitution and the clerk of this church is ordered to make letters of dismission for them."<sup>33</sup>

On the second Saturday in September 1817, the Holly Springs Baptist Church was constituted at the house of William Music, by Elders Augustine Clayton, Green Collier, and Richard Ray. This was the first Baptist Church



north of Green River in what is now Edmonson County, and served all of the region from Bear Creek to Nolin River and beyond.<sup>34</sup>

Holly Springs Church first joined the Green River Association and in 1820, they sent delegates James Jones and Rev. John Jones to represent them, and reported a membership of 17.<sup>35</sup>

This church had the misfortune to lose all their early records, hence we have rather an imperfect sketch from other sources. It would be safe to say among the early members were: Rev. John Jones, James Jones, William Lindsey, John Lindsey and Sallie Lindsey his wife, John Music, Montgomery Forbis, John Davidson, and others who will be mentioned in this sketch.<sup>36</sup>

After the church was organized, it appears that the church gathered for worship in the log cabins of its members until a meeting house was constructed on the property of Phillip Stice at the head of Indian Creek. Stice procured a fifty acre tract of land on the head of Indian Creek from Martin H. Webb in 1828.<sup>37</sup>

In 1830, Stice delivered a deed to the Holly Springs Church . . . "for and in consideration of 25¢," an acre of land from the above said tract, and which was described as being . . . "on the waters of Indian Creek."<sup>38</sup>

It was on this acre of ground that the first house of worship of Holly Springs Baptist Church stood. In 1832, Stice sold the land that joined the church property to Rev. John Jones, a minister of the Holly Springs Church.<sup>39</sup>

Jones acquired additional property joining this, and when he moved to Warren County, Illinois after 1850, the farm was sold to John Chandler.<sup>40</sup> His farm in later years was known as the W.E. Hogan farm, on which the present Lindseyville Garbage dump is now located.<sup>41</sup>

In later years, the old building, which had previously stood down on the creek, was torn down and reassembled out on the hill a short distance from the present residence of Kelburn Lindsey. It was used for a while for a house of worship by the people who lived around Lindseyville.

Mrs. Ray Vincent, related to the author that she distinctly remembered seeing part of the foundation rocks and a few remaining logs. She said her father, W.E. Hogan (born 1888), "helped drag the logs up there, and construct the building when he was a small boy."<sup>42</sup>

The old house has been torn down. The hand of time has fully accomplished the work of demolition. But that spiritual temple, of which every truly regenerated man and woman forms a part, will never feel the weight of years, nor yield to the wasting force of time. Sustained by the Almighty God, and this more glorious structure which we labor to erect, will endure with the rock upon which it is founded, not only through the ages, but its existence is absolute and eternal.

From its constitution in 1817, the Holly Springs Church worshipped with a good degree of prosperity. In 1829, under the ministry of Rev. John Jones, new members were baptized into the church. In 1838, another great harvest

was realized, when 45 new converts were baptized.<sup>43</sup>

In a letter written by Meredith York (Merd) Vincent, he stated that . . . "his grandfather and grandmother, Rubin and Easter Salings Vincent were borned again, joining the church at Holly Springs on Indian Creek and were baptized at the ford in Nolin River in 1836." He further stated that William Gardner and Jesse Moon were the preachers. The ford on Nolin was below First Creek Lake.<sup>44</sup>

Robert T. Gardner was another early minister in the Holly Springs Church. He joined by letter from Beaver Dam in April 1836. He was ordained to the ministry prior to 1843 and pastored Mt. Tabor in Barren County, for a short time after the death of Elder Jacob Locke. He later moved to Texas.<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps the most highly esteemed and useful preacher ever raised up in this old church was Rev. John Jones, son of Phillip and Nancy Webb Jones. John Jones was the 4th son of this couple and was born in Pendleton (now Perkins Co.), South Carolina on December 10, 1790 and came with his parents to Kentucky. As a young man he spent a short time near Edwardsville, Ill., during Indian troubles. He returned to what is now Edmonson Co., Ky., where he married Eleanor Garrison, January 30, 1813. They united with the Holly Springs Baptist Church that soon ordained him to preach the gospel. He was a very stout man and preached all over that portion of the country. He pastored Holly Springs for a considerable time, in addition to Beaver Dam at Rhoda, and Beaver Dam in Grayson County (now known as Leitchfield First Baptist Church). It is not known how many he baptized, but among those was his own father, age 60, who had been a Methodist previously. Rev. John Jones was chosen as messenger to the Green River and Liberty Associations at least 22 times.<sup>46</sup>

On the second Saturday in August 1837, the Green River Association met at the Holly Springs Church on Indian Creek, and Rev. John Jones preached the introductory sermon before a body of twenty-one churches.<sup>47</sup>

On the 20th of August 1842, Elder John Jones delivered the introductory sermon before the Liberty Baptist Association at the Glasgow Baptist Church. His sermon was based on Mark 13:34.<sup>48</sup>

About 1850, a number of families moved from this area to Warren Co., Illinois. Rev. Jones and almost all of his family as well as the families of his seven brothers and sisters were involved in this move. He preached there until his death May 16, 1862. He was a very strong lunged man but died of inflammation of the lungs. Soon after almost all of the Jones family moved to Union County, Iowa where his wife, Eleanor, died September 6, 1882.<sup>49</sup>

Rev. John Jones and his wife Eleanor had nine children, most of whom moved first to Illinois and then to Iowa. They were Martin W. Jones, who married Rosana Lindsey; Emily Jones who married William Morris; Veachel H. Jones, who married Sara Ann Gardner; Willis Jones who married Margaret Ray; Mary Jones who married Edward Elmore; Sarah M. Jones who married



J.M. Franklin; John H. Jones who married Lucy B. Bliss; Paradine Jones, unmarried; and Eliza A. Jones who married Fred Brice.<sup>50</sup>

Veachel Hobbs Jones, son of John and Eleanor, was born November 2, 1818 in Edmonson County. Soon after he became of age he was appointed deputy sheriff of Edmonson Co. and served for two years. He was then elected Sheriff and served for one term. In 1851, he was elected County Court Clerk. When that term expired he entered the practice of law and in 1856 moved to Glasgow, Ky. to continue that practice. In 1856 he was elected judge of Barren County Court. After serving two terms he returned to his practice of law.<sup>51</sup>

The success with which the Holly Springs Church attended has proven the wisdom of its founders. The early history of this church shows a prosperous career. In the first twenty years of their history they had sent out a number of members to other churches and reached an aggregate of 100 active members. It was during this highly prosperous state that the year of the "split" on missions came in 1840. A division followed which the minority under the leadership of Rev. John Jones withdrew from the old church and joined the Liberty Association.

The majority under the care of Rev. Robert T. Gardner retained the old meeting house and continued with the Green River Association. However, the following year, 1841, letters of dismission were granted to 46 members who followed Elder Jones to a new location in the Lindseyville community.

According to a statement by Earnest Lindsey, the Jones faction met for a while in a dwelling house across the road from the present residence of Charles E. Vincent. After a time, they removed to a building where J.D. Luttrell's house now stands. In 1869, Wm. Lindsey, Sr. granted to the trustees, James L. Lindsey and Joseph L. Lindsey, land to locate a church. The present Holly Springs Church is located in the Grassland community of Edmonson County.<sup>52</sup>

The membership who continued to meet in the old building on Indian Creek under the leadership of Elder R.T. Gardner, after a few years removed from Indian Creek to the Dismal Creek area of Jock community. In 1868, they obtained a deed for one acre of land from W.C. Dodge. The trustees at that time were: John Rich, James Lindsey, Jr., Miles Merideth, James R. Rich, and James A. Vincent, Jr.<sup>53</sup> The church stood where Silas Hunt's house now stands.<sup>54</sup>

The Holly Springs Church on Dismal Creek divided in 1874, with one part continuing with the Green River Association and the other group joining the newly formed "Moon" Association.<sup>55</sup>

The part of Holly Springs that remained with the Green River Association, being led by Fed Meredith, moved up to where the Bee Spring Church is now located. Fed Meredith donated property for the Holly Springs congregation to construct a new building. They continued under the name of Holly Springs