

A Brief History
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Tampa, Florida
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The first attempt to organize a Baptist Church in Tampa was in 1853 by Rev. J. H. BREAKER. In 1859, a second attempt was made and the First Baptist Church was born. The charter sixteen members were: J. M. HAYMAN, J. S. TAYLOR, JESSE CARTER, R. M. PLYANT, JOSEPH CASEY, SARA GAIL, NANCY T. HAYGOOD, SUSAN JOHNSON, ELIZABETH MARSH, LUCINDY MURPHY, KATHERINE MANSFIELD, E. A. McCARDY, MARSH J. CASEY, M. J. HAYMAN, ANN M. CARTER and JANE C. JOHNSON. Along with seven Negro slaves who were admitted to the church, the membership was 23.

The Presbytery participating in the organization of the church was composed of DANILE STAFFORD and JAMES S. BAKER, whose names were affixed to the original articles of constitution. JAMES M. HAYMAN, who in early records of the church was referred to as "Elder Hayman", became the church's first pastor. Services were held twice a month at first, with two services for white and one for colored.

The first house of worship was located on Twiggs and Tampa Streets on a lot given to the church by the County Commissioners through the influence of MARTIN CUNNINGHAM, a church member. This was the first house of worship erected in Tampa. People often had to walk through deep sand to get to the church.

Church growth was suspended during the early 1860's, and many families were scattered. Services were suspended for several months at one time and the church organ and chandelier was cared for by J. M. HAYGOOD. SAMUEL S. CRAFT and WILLIAM F. NIGELS served as pastors during the years of Reconstruction.

On April 30, 1882 W. T. GORDON became pastor, and was succeeded the following year by A. F. RANDALL. Later E. H. HAYDEN and WILLIAM H. SIMONS served as pastors.

In 1893, the church moved to its present location west of the Hillsborough River, selling the old church location for \$4,000. The new building was erected at a cost of \$15,000, the cornerstone being laid in 1895. The church, with additions, stands on this site today.

-Kirby Wilson, Editor

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A GOOD TIP

When writing to COURTHOUSES, if you ask for a PROBATE PACKET instead of a WILL, you will often find what you are seeking, because sometimes an individual did not leave a WILL but did leave some PROPERTY.