

CONCISE HISTORY OF ANTIOCH CHURCH FROM ITS ORGANIZATION IN 1837
TO OCTOBER 1, 1962

Antioch Baptist Church, situated in the upper end of Prince William County near the Hopewell Gap of the Bull Run Mountains, was organized on April 22, 1837 with nineteen members, six males and thirteen females, who withdrew from Long Branch by letter and many of them having located in this neighborhood, thought it wise to constitute a church when a presbytery was called consisting of Elder Wm. F. Broddus, John C. Herndon and George Love, the latter acting as Clerk, Pro. Tem.

They met in a small log building (a school house erected by Bro. Wm. E. Foley and now owned and occupied by Mr. Joseph Sinclair) in which they continued to worship until the present one was erected. Elder Broddus preached the sermon of the occasion from the 102nd Psalm and the 16th verse: "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His Glory," after which he stated the object of the meeting, and a summary of Divine Truths entertained by the Brethren were read and approved. They were duly constituted a Church. The right hand of fellowship was given by the presbytery, prayer by Bro. Love. They then proceeded to call a Pastor. Bro. John C. Herndon was called and having accepted, at once commenced his ministry. Bro. Wm. E. Foley was chosen clerk of the church, which office he filled up to his death which occurred in 1868, when the present incumbent, John A. Harrison was called to fill the vacancy. Bro. Wm. M. Nalls was elected Deacon at the following (May) meeting. Rev. John C. Herndon continued pastor for one year only, when he immigrated to Missouri with his large family. Then the little flock was left without a shepherd. It was not long however, before the services of his eldest son, Thaddous Herndon was obtained, who took charge of the Church, as pastor just one month after his father's resignation and continued faithfully breaking to the little flock the bread of life up to three months before his decease, which occurred June 2nd, 1878.

Dr. Haynes preached his funeral sermon for this church. He, Bro. Herndon, preached regularly twice a month for a period of forty years, except the last three years of the Civil War, at which time he was prevented from getting to his appointments regularly. During his illness, Bro. S. M. Athey preached for us once a month on Sabbath evening on his return home from Little River. During Bro. Herndon's ministry, the Church House was thoroughly renovated, the side galleries were taken out leaving the present one. The doors were on the south side with the pulpit between them. A new roof and new seats were also among the repairs. The writer is thus particular in describing the house of worship because very few now coming here know anything about the change.

Bro. Athey informed the Church (when asked to become our pastor) that his time was all taken up with other churches and he could not do so. So we began looking up a pastor and in October 1881, Bro. S. P. Barber accepted the call of the Church and served us acceptably until his death in November 1882. Bro. Wyer of Warrenton, preached his funeral for the Church.

After the death of Bro. Barber, Dr. J. A. Chamblip of Warrenton, preached for us for about six months. Then came in succession Rev. T. P. Warren, G. A. Hall, T. W. Newman, F. P. Berkley, O. C. Peyton, and last our beloved pastor (the present pastor, Mr. Trainham).

from Ron Turner
12/8/97

During all these years the Church had many accessions and revivals, but during our present pastor's labors, the Church has been greatly revived. Many more have been added to her number than ever before in the same length of time.

The Salem Association held its session with this Church in 1842, when the House of Worship was dedicated to God's service. The writer has forgotten nor can he find any record of the proceedings.

While the House was being erected in warm weather, the body worshiped in the School House, as above referred to, but during inclement winter weather our meetings were held in the houses of the Brethren alternately, and precious seasons were then enjoyed.

During these meetings, Rev. T. D. H., George Love, R. N. Herndon, Charles Adams, Henry Herndon, A. H. Spilman, H. W. Dodge, Dr. Level Marders and others laboured with our pastor in protracted meetings to the edification and the building up of the Church.

During a period of fifty years, the Church struggled on, and was at times sorely tried, but out of them all, the Lord has delivered, and brought us, trusting in His mercy and abiding in His love, safely on to the present time (about 1893). (The above was written by Mr. Harrison.)

The new Church was erected in 1902. During the course of construction, Sunday School and Church services were held in the School House. In 1903, Brother Trainham accepted a call to Southwest Virginia and the Church extended a call to Rev. W. E. Lowe of lower Prince William County, who accepted the call and labored among us for several years.

He in turn was followed by the Rev. J. A. T. Marstella of Washington. During his pastorate, in August 1909, the Church entertained the Association. The Rev. Dr. W. F. Watson of First Baptist Church, Alexandria, preaching the Associational Sermon from the 1st chapt. of Deut., 6th verse: "Ye have dwelt long enough in this Mount."

The pastor referred to by the writer of the original paper was Bro. C. W. Trainham who accepted a call to the Church in March 1893, and served the Church faithfully and well for ten years. In 1894, a few members, among them Mr. and Mrs. James Hulfish, Mr. and Mrs. Will Jordon, Mrs. George Smith, Miss Elizabeth Foley and others, withdrew by letter and established a Church at Haymarket, Bro. Trainham serving this Church also, as well as Manassas and Little River.

It was at the reunion referred to in the original paper by Mr. Harrison, that the building of a new Church was discussed, the old Stone Church proving too small to accommodate the crowds which then attended services.

Rev. T. D. D. Clark of Manassas followed the Rev. Dr. Marstella and as he was "a sweet singer of Israel" his voice added much to his pastoral duties from 1911 - 1913. He in turn was followed by the Rev. W. L. Naff who was our faithful pastor for about four years. The Rev. Edward Tabor of Washington, followed Mr. Naff and preached for us for a short period, leaving us to accept a Church at Front Royal.

In 1921 the Church was without a pastor and in 1922 extended a call to the Rev. V. R. Council who had resigned his Church in order that he might preach to the soldiers in the camps around Norfolk and other places, and was at this time in Baltimore, resting from his arduous services. He accepted the call and in May 1922 he came to us and has served us faithfully and untiringly ever since. He too, has added much to his ministerial duties by the gracious friendliness of his manner and the sweetness of his voice.

In January 1926, the log-house in which the Church was first organized, was put on the market by the Sinclair heirs and was purchased by the Women's Missionary Society of the Church to be held in trust by a committee of the women as Church property.

Brother John A. Harrison, who died in March 1899, was succeeded by Brother R. R. Smith, as Clerk, who has been our faithful clerk for 30 years.

Rev. V. H. Council served as pastor at Antioch until ill health forced him to retire about 8 months before his death on December 5, 1935. The Church called Rev. Barnett Grimsley as pastor on April 1, 1937. He served us well for about 16 years.

Rev. John Adkinson came in answer to our call in 1954. He stayed three months. We joined the field with Little River in 1955 with Rev. Willie Davis as pastor. He resigned in 1956.

We had many supply speakers. One who came often was Rev. Robert Allen from Arlington.

In January 1957, the W. M. U. gave legal deed to the Sinclair property to the Church. The Church repaired the house for rental property.

Rev. Guy Hayl and Lester Marsh (Associational missionary) supplied our pulpit in 1959 - 1960.

Due to an ever dwindling congregation we were unable to continue services. The Church was closed October 1, 1962 except for the Annual Homecoming Service on the 2nd Sunday in August each year.

In 1965, the remaining members were dismissed to unite with a church of their choice, the greater number going to Haymarket Baptist with Rev. Russell O. Cutchins as pastor.

The 1st Home Coming (All Day Meeting) was the 3rd Sunday in August 1922, followed by a week of protracted meetings (2 services each day, 11 a.m. & 8 p.m.) at which time 27 people united with the Church by baptism. Baptismal services took place in the creek that flows through the Church yard.

This rounds out 50 years that this day has been observed. It was probably in the 1940's that the name was changed from All Day Meeting to Home Coming.