

Our History

According to Wayfarers in Walton, Mr. J.A. Vallance moved from New York in 1868 and bought a farm in the southeastern part of Walton county near which stood a Methodist church. A Missionary Baptist, Mr. Vallance purchased the house of worship and real estate upon which it stood and offered it to the Baptists in the neighborhood. The church was constituted as Ebenezer Baptist Church on January 30, 1869 during the Reconstruction Years following the Civil War in a war-torn land whose greatest need was Jesus Christ. The presbytery consisted of ministers G.A. Nunnally, J.M. Stillwell, and J.J. Wallace with L.A. Patillo leading the church the first year. The ten charter members of the church were Mr. & Mrs. William Arnold, Mr. & Mrs. James Blasingame, N.E. Blasingame, George Patillo, Mr. & Mrs. L.A. Patillo, Lula Patillo, and Nancy Patillo.

Ebenezer applied for membership and was accepted by the Appalachee Baptist Association on September 18, 1869. Ebenezer began to prosper when Joel W. Butts was called as pastor in 1876. In 1878 a new church house was built on the site of the old building. It was recorded that the church enjoyed a thriving Bible School and boasted of forty-six members.

The Ebenezer Baptist Centennial Celebration Publication (1869-1969) includes a copy of the Quit-Claim Deed (furnished by Mrs. Herman Astin) from J.A. Vallance. Dated April 18, 1896, the tract of land known as Ebenezer Church grove containing the church house and the school house (approximately two acres) was released by J.A. Vallance to the Deacons of Ebenezer Baptist Church "to have and to hold for church and school purposes only." The deed was recorded in the Clerk's Office, Superior Court of Walton County, Georgia on July 4, 1896.

From Ebenezer Church minutes recorded on December 11, 1896, the church agreed to see J.A. Vallance "in regards to a cemetery." Apparently, they were not able to agree on additional land at that time. The Vallance farm was later purchased by Edward (Gennie) and Molly Peters. In February, 1951, the first grave was dug at Ebenezer Baptist Cemetery. The untimely death of Mrs. Herbert (Hulda) Peters prompted the Cemetery's birth. Due to her love and devotion to Ebenezer and her family, the family wanted her to be buried near her home and close to her church. The current land owner, Larry H. Hawk, and church officials agreed that \$150 was a fair price to pay for the cotton field adjoining the church. Charlie Hawk gave \$50, Austell Hawk gave \$50, Larry H. Hawk donated \$50 and the Ebenezer Baptist Church Cemetery was born.

Ebenezer has long been a mission minded church. A collection of \$5.00 was recorded as given to Foreign Missions in 1872. Beginning in 1877, some contribution was recorded to missions giving each year. Minutes of the December 11, 1896 conference stated the plans for monthly distribution of contributions. Of the twelve months, three months were devoted to Home Missions, three months to State Missions, two months to Foreign Missions, and one month each to Mercer University, Indigent Ministers, Orphan's Home and Ministerial Education. In 1901, the records show that the Missionary Society gave to State Missions \$3.43, to Foreign Missions \$2.71, to Home Missions \$2.00 and had on hand \$5.70. Also the organization had made quilts for the Orphan's Home. Currently Ebenezer gives generously to the Cooperative Program and to Associational Missions.

The first official mention of WMU was in 1903 with Mrs. C.H. Crocroft listed as President. According to the Ebenezer Baptist Centennial Celebration Publication, the first Sunday School was officially organized at Ebenezer in 1875 with 30 members. However, earlier evidence of Sunday School was revealed with 11 being recorded in Sunday School in 1872. Sunday School struggled in the 1930's-1940's. Mrs. Rachel Hester was Sunday School Superintendent from 1951-1956. She reports that in the early 1940's, she initiated the plan to get Sunday School started every Sunday. SUNBEAM was organized at Ebenezer in 1922.

Music Ministry has long been a vital part of Ebenezer's program. In 1945, three pianists were listed: Mrs. Lillie Adcock, Mrs. T.B. Thomas, and Mrs. Sanders P. Knight. Of particular interest is the first recorded Music Director in 1948, Mr. Sanders P. Knight, who held this office