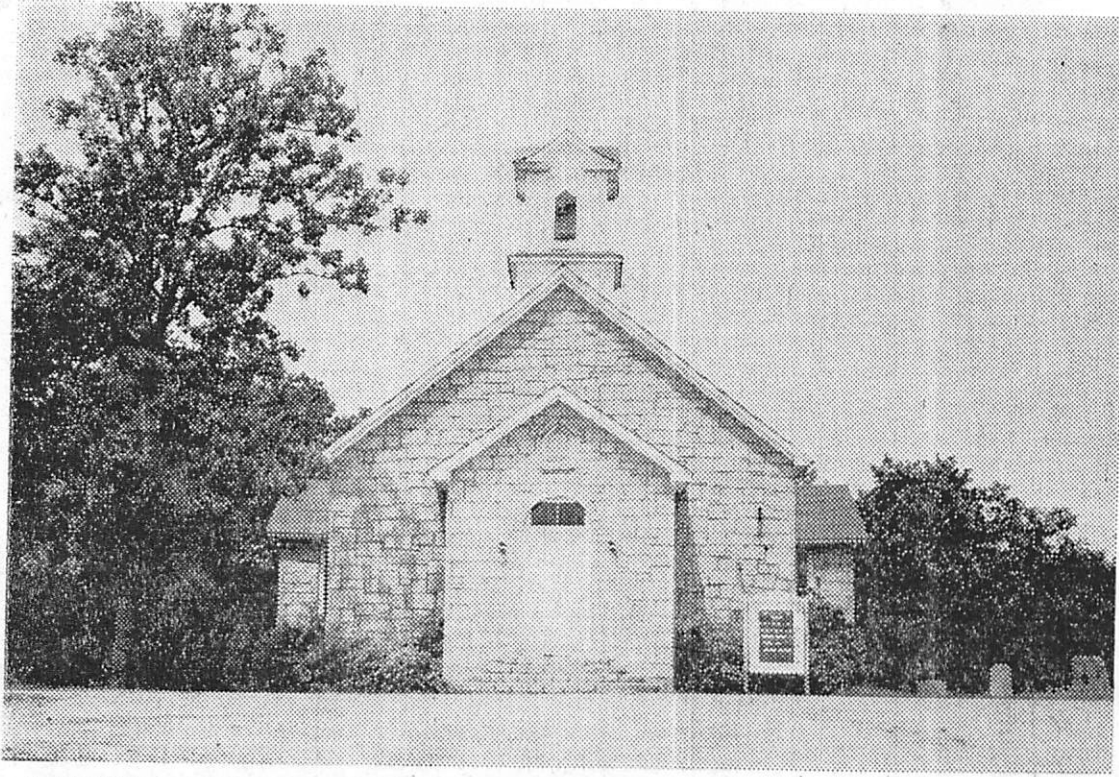


# The Rural Churches of Fairfield County



## HISTORY OF FAIRFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH

(Compiled by Mrs. R. B. Shedd and Mrs. G. W. Timms)

This is the tenth in a series of articles dealing with the history of the ten churches enrolled in the Fairfield Rural Church Improvement Program.

Due to the fact that all records have been lost the following account of Fairfield Baptist Church history has been taken primarily from Mrs. Ollin J. Owens "Furman's Fairfield Day".

Among the members of Rock Creek Church was the Davis family of Monticello. Rock Creek Church ordained Jonathan Davis to the Gospel Ministry and in 1820 he organized Fairfield Church.

The site selected for the building of Fairfield Church was about three and a half miles south and west of the town of Winnsboro in the direction of Monticello. The Church faced south. The membership increased rapidly and, because the community was made up of wealthy planters, the church soon grew to a position of strength and prestige. Baptists throughout the state came to regard it as one of the strongest Country Churches in the Convention.

The years Furman—(Now Furman University, located at Greenville, S. C.) spent in Fairfield County were so much a part of Fairfield Baptist Church history that some mention must be made here of that time—On December 17, 1835 at Charleston, Rev. Jonathan Davis was elected president of Furman's Board of Trustees. This board included on its list some of the ablest Baptists in South Carolina during that period.

Davis dreamed of moving the school to Fairfield and spared no effort to make his dream come true. Davis knew the ability of the Fairfield congregation. He was familiar with the fine displays of carriages, livery horses, and drivers that arrived in front of Fairfield

Church on Meeting Sundays. The description of these is still handed down in Fairfield County to remind the present generation of the last splendor of days before the war. The Rev. Jonathan Davis realized his dream but the years Furman spent in Fairfield County were hard ones. Due to a number of reasons — one, that no railway passed near the school — it was decided that it would be best to move. Soon after Furman left, Fairfield Church became involved in controversies. The exact cause of these is buried in obscurity, but some tradition claims that there were arguments over some property that had once belonged to the Institution. There is some documentary evidence to uphold this. Rev. Jonathan Davis died in 1855 and shortly thereafter the church burned down and (it is believed) all the church records were lost.

In 1858 all but two or three members of Fairfield Church withdrew and organized the First Baptist Church of Winnsboro. Following the war between the States Old Fairfield Church went practically out of existence and no meetings were held until 1882. In that year a Rev. Mahon of Union came and held a revival meeting in the log school house about a mile and a quarter west of the original site of Fairfield Church. This school house was the property of Andrew Young. Eight converts were received and Rev. Mahon found three women who had once been members of Old Fairfield Church. These, Mrs. Emma Young (wife of Andrew Young) and her two sisters, Mrs. Jane Gregg and Josie Robertson, met in Mrs. Young's home and voted in the new members. From that time on Fairfield Church has continued, though on a new site near where the log school building stood.

In 1884 when Rev. B. F. Corley was pastor at Fairfield, a small

Church House was built. In 1902 under the leadership of Rev. W. R. Briscoe a new House of Worship was built, and dedicated on August 9, 1903. The Sermon (Psalms 84—10) was by Dr. T. M. Bailey of Furman University. Deacons were J. T. Young, A. M. Park, and John M. Timms.

Improvements on Fairfield Church building in 1949 included the addition of Sunday School rooms, Baptistry, and enclosing the frame Church in granite. Dedication Day was July 30, 1950. On the building committee were the following members—Grady Timms, Chairman; Mrs. John Sellers, Barney Timms, James Park, Lewis Timms, and Phillip Timms.

In 1954-55 Fairfield Church members built a Pastorium, which is located across the highway from the Church.

Some former Fairfield Church Pastors, Rev. Jonathan Davis, Rev. B. F. Corley, Rev. A. M. Pittman, Rev. W. R. Briscoe, Rev. H. K. Ezell, Rev. J. E. Freeman, Rev. C. W. Hood, Rev. J. P. Isenhower, and Rev. O. W. Hammett.

The present pastor of Fairfield Church is Rev. R. J. Brewington. The Sunday School Supt. is C. S. Timms. Mrs. R. J. Brewington is President of the W.M.U. The oldest member of the Church is Mrs. Sam Timms. Membership of Fairfield Church is 50. A Vacation Bible School has been held each year since 1949. Services are held each Sunday. Sunday School at 10:00. Morning Worship at 11:00 A.M.

Major goals for the Rural Church Improvement Program include erect cemetery fence, organize Brotherhood, increase Sunday school attendance, and one Sunday evening service each month, also to repair and paint blinds.