
The History of the Corn Creek Baptist Church

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A HISTORY OF CORN CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Corn Creek Baptist Church, located nine miles north of Bedford on a stream of the same name as the church, was founded in 1800 during the great revival period at the turn of the century.

Through the years the church has been known to be strict in its laws, having banished people from its company for various misconduct. It's been said that in long ago meetings, a man had the duty of carrying a wooden stick, so that if any of the flock drifted off to sleep, they could be poked back to wakefulness.

The upkeep of the church from the time of its beginnings has been faithfully attended to, being the second oldest church in the State of Kentucky known to still be in the original building. Since that time, to keep up with the growth of the community and members of the church, the building has been moved from its spot which was flanked by graves in the cemetery and more rooms and facilities has been added.

Its beautiful cemetery is centuries old, and buried there are many great pioneer men and women, the forefathers of our heritages. Corn Creek cemetery has been praised as being a most beautiful and desirable place in which to be buried.

Following is an account of the minister, Bro. John Taylor, the first minister called to preach at Corn Creek.

Brother John Taylor, owner of a considerable tract of land in the Mt. Tabor environs on a bluff overlooking the Ohio River (Somewhere on the top of Milton Hill, Possibly near Moffett Cemetery), was the first minister called to preach

at the newly erected Corn Creek "Meeting House" and he and his wife and their five black slaves were admitted to membership. Brother Taylor, being something of a historian, wrote a book, History of Ten Churches published in 1823. Within the book Bro. Taylor relates Corn Creek Baptist Church's history from the very earliest:

Taken from A History of Ten Baptist Churches, by John Taylor Second Edition Bloomfield, Kentucky 1827. (This book can be found at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This information was obtained from the Trimble County Public Library.)

The Move to Kentucky

I had gotten a flat bottom boat, to move my household furniture, and year's provision down the river, sixty or seventy miles to Mount Byrd; this provision seemed needed, as I was going into the woods, my boat sunk in the river, with chief of my effects in it, and though the clear loss was only about a hundred dollars, yet many of my things was much injured by getting wet. We had some rough cabins prepared to go into, but surrounded by one of the heaviest forest's I ever saw. It was now late in March, and our bread to get the next year, only about four acres cleared and no fence around it, was our beginning at Mount Byrd. I had acquired some acquaintance with the people from my visit there, but my wife was a perfect stranger at all, a young church of perhaps twenty members, had been constituted not long before I moved and was called Corn Creek Church, the place of worship was about four miles from Mount Byrd. The opposite shore of the Ohio, was Indian title, and the Indians hunting on their own land about a mile from my house, but they were at peace. At the first monthly meeting of the little church (Corn Creek) after our arrival at Mount Byrd, myself and family, gave our membership to the church. After I was received by the church, I informed them, that though I had been long a preacher, it was not by their

sanction as a church, that I was at their disposal as one of their members, that if they required any ministerial service from me, I expected them to signify it, otherwise I should not make free among them in that way. Perhaps what myself said brought on the same day a request to take the Pastoral care of the church, Perhaps I had Baptized more than half the members that were in the church, at the times of my visits there before I moved. The older brethern did not hesitate at that request, as they had no other preacher in the church but myself. I then opened up my own views of particular pastorship that myself was never calculated for it, that I was ready to do any service I was capable, without that particular charge. With which the church was perfectly content and has had no particular pastor since.

Heavy Labors

As to our earthly concerns, we had never seen such heavy labour before us, to obtain support, as now. We had no time to pause and think, but go right to work, the timber quite green, and standing very thick; consisting of various sorts, as Poplar, Beach, Walnut, Ash, and other kinds, with the largest kind of Buck-eye, three or four feet through, with their trunks an hundred feet long. It was usual to get from three and four, to seven and eight cut of rails from a tree; many of the poplars were six or seven feet through. The looks of the soil encouraged us to rush on, in hopes of future reward. I had at that time three strong black men, and a boy, and as many black women, who could help us burn brush, and roll logs. My two sons, one eighteen, and the other sixteen years old and myself now in a manner in the prime of life, though upwards of fifty years old.

The sound of our axes made entertaining music in this mighty forest. My wife and daughters, with a black woman or two in the house, made the wheels roar in our large cabins, with also use of a loom there, made it probable that we should get food and raiment.

A Return To Health:

Another thing in our favour, though for seven years, we had been afflicted with sickness, the sweet air and water of that lofty bluff of Mount Byrd, restored us all to good health again. We first enclosed twenty-five acres of land in two apartments, thirteen of which we planted in corn, and two in flax and vegetables. We had ten barrels of corn per acre that year; that, with the help of a good beach mast, made us bread enough, and to spare. After laying by our corn, we cleared out ten acres we had enclosed, and put it in wheat; we then enclosed twenty-five acres with a design to clear it next winter; and twenty acres more we enclosed for the use of a pasture. After we had cleared our intended ground the next winter, we had taken down so much timber, that we found the long rolling prodigious heavy. I took notice that we spent 10 days in log rolling; and after which it was more trouble to burn up this green timber than to roll it. However after we had planted our corn, we concluded to go to building.

Building A House:

We did but little at brick making till after harvest, when we moved on with rapidity; we made about an hundred thousand bricks, put up a house seventy feet by twenty-two, a stone cellar under the whole of it, and forty feet of it two stories above the cellar--before Christmas had it all covered in and moved into one end of it in February.. We then cleared the ground we had enclosed, and enclosed twenty acres more for pasture; so that when we had been at Mount Byrd two years we had seventy acres cleared land, twenty more enclosed, living in the house I have described, and a very great orchard of apple, peach, and other kinds of fruit, so that in Gallintia(now Trimble) county, I was a little like Job when he lived in the past, in the early days of his prosperity.

Probably Richest Man in County:

I is probable I was the richest man in the county, where I lived; but wise

providence has found a way, to put me in different circumstances, since that time. I do not recollect paying one dollar for labour in making all this improvement except to mechanics. If it be asked if our labour was not too severe, I should no doubt answer in the affirmative; But it was all done with great pleasantness, for I have found both by experience and observation, that when master goes, all the rest goes cheerfully to business.

Fifty Families:

Through the course of this two -years, I preached but little, except on Saturday's and Sunday's or of nights. I was commonly at church meetings on those days somewhere. The settlement in which I lived did not admit of much preaching, fifty families perhaps, were the amount of all the people, and they had much to do to get their living in this heavy timbered country.

Settlement Increased:

The settlement however, increased, and the church at Corn Creek grew, though but slowly; there had been a revival in the place, as I have named, before I moved there. And perhaps in two or three years after I joined the church, at different times, I Baptized about twenty people, the church being then about sixty in number. And I think she never grew higher than about eighty till I moved to Mount Byrd. Philomen Vawter moved from Bullittsburg and joined Corn Creek church. He was a respectable preacher loud to the world. Soon after his arrival at Corn Creek, the church thought proper to ordain him. This gave me great pleasure, to have a fellow-labourer in the Lord; and in the church he was of great usefulness, till he moved to Indiana.

Left the Church;

I left Corn Creek in March, 1815, after living at Mount Byrd thirteen years; the church at Corn Creek While I lived there had grown but slowly; I had Baptized while there perhaps about thirty people; I think they were about eighty in number when I left them, after which they invited supplies from abroad for a year or two; a young speaker moving into the bounds of the church was licensed to preach among

them, his name was Wallace; a George Kendall who was Baptized at Corn Creek, began also to speak in public and was licensed by the church. At length a William Burkley, was invited to attend them, and from appearances of success, he moved and lived among them two or three years. Under his labours, and the zealous efforts of the younger preachers, a considerable revival took place, so that in one year Mr. Burkley Baptized upwards of a hundred people. Mr. Burkley attended several other churches about this time, and was successful at them all, but at length moved his family to the lower end of the state.

Constituted A New Church:

The church had grown so that public worship was kept up with respectability; however, they soon contemplated a new church for the sake of convenience; they constituted a church called Hunter's Bottom, on the River, this new establishment included Mr. Wallace, whom the new church had ordained since their constitution.

HIGHLIGHTS OF HISTORY

Corn Creek Baptist Church grew out of the revival fervor at the turn of the eighteenth century. John Taylor, in 1802, moved to the community called Mt. Byrd named after the Colonel Byrd who had received 1000 acres as a land grant after the Revolutionary War. The large bluff overlooking the Ohio River is the site of the community of Milton today.

Corn Creek Baptist Church was situated on a plot of land to be deeded by Drakeford Gray. The copies of the deed show the actual transaction occurred on April 6, 1804. The deed says, "an indenture took place between Drakeford Gray and the Baptist Church on Corn Creek in Gallatin County in the state of Kentucky." The Gray family was rather prominent in the community and had contributed to the formation of the church. Taylor had been responsible for the conversion of Presley Fray, son of Drakeford, and evidently influenced the family to become strong supporters of the church. In our cemetery the tombstones of the Gray family may still

be read.

Articles of Faith:

Corn Creek Baptist Church was founded upon nine articles of faith. The articles of faith given include:

We believe regeneration, sanctification, justification, salvation are one by virtue of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and that through His Mediator and assurance to glory we may obtain that great salvation as laid down by the Holy Scriptures and no other way.

Also adopted by the church were some twenty rules applying to the business of the church such as when business meetings would be held, election of a moderator and rules of order. Significant is rule ten which says, "That brotherly love may continue we do agree, as far as possible in all causes to treat with our Brethern being agreeable to the direction given in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

After being in the formation of Salem Association, the second association organized in Kentucky, Corn Creek joined the Long Run Association and in 1825 joined with nine churches from the Long Run Association in the formation of the Sulphur Fork Association. Corn Creek continued to grow as shown in the record of 1840 wherein a total of 53 persons joined the church that year. The letter sent to the association includes the comment. "The Lord has wonderfully blessed this church after a long wintry season....The church has received considerable addition."

By 1861 the church membership had grown to 315, however, Kentucky as well as the rest of the country was involved in the blood-bath known as the Civil War. As a result of the division in the nation churches have already been divided into North and South, Christian work suffered. Thus it was that Corn Creek suffered during this period, the loss of some of it's members to the Cause of the Civil War and also the slaves who -had been allowed to be members of the church so that in 1879 Corn Creek reported to the Sulphur Fork Association only 98 members.

Corn Creek Academy:

Linked closely with the history of Corn Creek Baptist Church was a school known as the Corn Creek Academy. John Taylor mentions the school as early as 1812. There was a substantial brick building to house the academy that stood in

the present church parking lot and was replaced in 1918 by a frame building positioned on top of a rock quarry on the old Bedford-Milton turnpike. The academy was later taken over the county and the state and run as a one-room county school.

CORN CREEK SESQUICENTENNIAL

Water, water everywhere and the dampness spoiled the feast. The statement might be slightly exaggerated however, it is supposed that a great many people stayed away from the 150th anniversary celebration of the "old meeting house" on account of the constant rainfall. Despite of the rain, though, an approximate 150 persons gathered to pay tribute to the men and women of the past and present, who have built and maintained in a fine state of repair, the Corn Creek Baptist Church.

Although complete plans for the day were considerably curtailed, the crowd enjoyed the same sincere fellowship that was manifest 150 years ago within the same walls. Dinner that was tentatively planned for the outside was spread up on long tables inside the church and the day passed by various oldtimers recounting phases of history concerning the old church. In the afternoon, the Rev. Folsom, of the Baptist Seminary in Louisville, delivered the anniversary message, offering much praise and congratulation toward the spirited devotion that has been so prominent in the history of Corn Creek Church.

Another feature on the program was the singing of the Mitchell Family, a group comprised of W.S. Mitchell, Mrs. William Buhlig, and Mrs. Buglig's daughters.

For the interest of the members of the old church at Corn Creek and all others who might care to know, the church plot deed reads in part as follows: "Beginning at a small beech nine poles from the southeast corner of the present meeting house, thence north thirty degrees, west eighteen polls to a beech and dogwood, thence south thirty degrees, west eighteen poles to two small beech and sugar trees, thence a straight line to the beginning...containing two acres of ground more or less.

..... Gallatin County Court, January term 1804.