

HENDERSON'S CHAPEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Henderson's Chapel Baptist Church, organized May 19, 1857, is older than the Sevier County Baptist Association and the church was instrumental in organizing the Association.

The first church building was made of logs and built by slave labor. A later building at Henderson's Springs was moved to the present location at 407 Henderson Road, Pigeon Forge. The membership built additional rooms, renovated and re-designed the building, adding new furniture, a heating system and all of the conveniences necessary for comfort. It emerged a beautiful church building with a solid, well informed Baptist congregation.

Members of the early church played a vital part in the history of the Association, serving on committees and helping to advance the ministries of the Association. At the close of the organizational meeting, according to Association minutes, the last paragraph states: "Adjourned to meet with the church at Henderson's Springs, Sevier County, Tenn. on Tuesday before the second Sunday in October, 1887."

Members who were active at that first Association meeting included Reverend W. C. McPherson, the first Association Colporteur Committee chairman. He recommended that the churches support a Colporteur who would visit all of the churches.

W. Y. Henderson was Association clerk at the first meeting of the Association and his finance report as chairman of the finance committee showed a total of \$16.95 contributed from 22 churches for the printing of the Minutes. Henderson's Chapel was one of the liberal givers with a donation of one dollar. Most churches gave less than a dollar. Mr. Henderson also served as messenger to the State Convention and as chairman of the Education Commission, also as member of the Executive Board.

Thomas Sharp, a Henderson's Chapel member, served on the Education Commission and J. F. Sharp represented the Association at the Nolachucky Association.

Henderson's Chapel early pastors were the Reverends B. P. Roach, D. R. Mullendore, W. W. Bailey, and Roy Arwood. Reverend Hudson B. Chesteen is pastor of the 298-member church in 1991.

Mattie S. Murrell relates the story of Henderson's Chapel church as told by her father, the late George F. Sharp:

"The Henderson's Chapel Church was first started at 'Henderson's Springs' near where the hotel stood. The church grew until it was over crowded as everyone in those days put on their Sunday go-to-meeting clothes and attended church. So after several years the church took care of the crowds. Bill and Rebecca Henderson gave land for a new church to be built."

“My dad, who was born in December, 1885, wasn’t old enough to go to school. He said that when they moved the church he rode the wagon back and forth to haul the lumber from the church at the springs to the new spot where our church is today. He said going to get a load of lumber he would ride in the wagon seat then coming back, he would ride on the coupling pole and let his feet splash in the water, which there was three rivers and creeks to cross. So from this record the church that we now have has been here since about 1890 or 1891.”

“The two side class rooms on the side were added on in the early 1930s. Dad and my brother with other members of the church went to the mountains, tore down a building, and hauled the lumber out on wagons. It took a day to make one load.”

“P.S. I have been a member of this church since September 7, 1930, 56 years. I was baptized in the Pigeon River by the Reverend Jake Sharp.”