

CANEY FORK BAPTIST CHURCH TO DEMOLISH CURRENT BUILDING

2396 Hwy 70 E, Cookeville, TN 38506

COOKEVILLE — Sunday will be the last congregation will have at their building at 2396 Hwy. 70 E. in Cookeville until this time next year. The church family that is small, but growing, will be demolishing their current building to create a facility three times



larger, as well as 146 total parking spaces.

“It’s been in discussions for years, but in 2010-2011 is when we got really serious about planning for a new building,” Pastor Steve Thornton said.

“This is the oldest church that is still active in the Upper Cumberland. I think there were a few churches that were as old or older, but they are no longer active.”

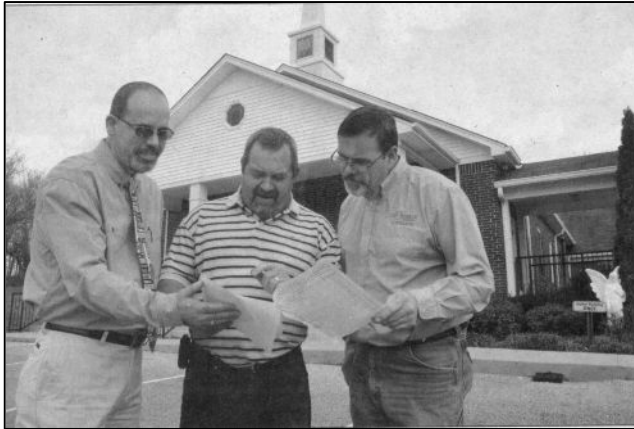
The exact year that Caney Fork Baptist began is unknown, but church historians believe that it first started in the home of Joshua and Winnie Williams Bartlett who moved from Kentucky to the Dry Valley area in 1806. They built a fort on the south side of the Falling Water River, and inside that they created their cabin home where it is believed other settlers started gathering for worship.

Church services continued to be held in that log home even after the Bartlett family moved out until the community built a structure on the north side of the river to house both their church and their school. It was here that some confusion arose about the church’s name. The new building was located near a mill owned by Hyrum Brown, which people called “Brown’s mill.” The school was named Brown’s Mill School, and for a while historians believed that the church was called Brown’s Mill Church as well. However they now believe that the church was always called Caney Fork Baptist Church, and that it was only sometimes referred to as “the church at Brown’s mill.”

The current building that houses the church was built in 1931.

“When they moved from the home and they built the church down by the river, they bought a bell,” Thornton said. “We still have it. They moved it up here when they built this building.”

“When the tornadoes came through in ‘73, they rang that bell to warn everyone,” Kathy Daugherty, secretary, said. “There were 50-something people in the basement of the church — it took down all of our woods that were adjoining the building. It was during a Wednesday night prayer meeting, and the winds moved one of the columns on the porch like six inches. David (Clouse, music director)’s grandfather died in those tornadoes, and my grandmother died about 11 days later from injuries.” There have been additions made to the buildings over the years, such as a library, more Sunday school rooms, and a



fellowship hall. Church members laugh now when they remember that many protested that the building was too large. These days, members fill every seat in the sanctuary, and some even have to filter into two Sunday school rooms where the service is broadcast on a television screen.

(Pictured: From left, Tracy Daugherty, associate pastor; Steve Thornton, pastor; and David Clouse,

music director; take a look through their church’s history while stand in front of the building that will soon be demolished to build a new sanctuary.)

“We’ve just outgrown all of our facilities,” Daugherty said. “We’re full. If it wasn’t for the little kids going down to children’s church so we can breathe a little, we would probably have to use the fellowship hall as an overflow area, too.”

While the construction of the new building is underway, Caney Fork Baptist Church will be meeting at Avery Trace Middle School. They are in for a year of bringing along, setting up and tearing down their worship and Sunday school areas each weekend, however they know the inconvenience will be well worth it. In just one year, they’ll have a larger meeting place of their own where the whole church family can worship together, with plenty of room for growth.

This Sunday will be a special service, and anyone who has ever worshiped with Caney Fork Baptist Church — and anyone wanting to come for the first time — is invited to this historic event for the church. In addition to their regular Sunday school service at 9:45 a.m. and morning worship at 11 a.m., they will be creating a time capsule to be buried during the new construction that will include things like notes from the congregation, a brick from the old building, a cloth used for Lord’s supper, and a video of the service. There will also be the opportunity to form a prayer chain around the perimeter of the new building to dedicate the site to God. A meal will follow the service.

“We expect there will be lots of people coming since it will be the last time service will be held in this building,” Clouse said.



(Pictured: Last service at the old building, 303 people came to the service).

Pieces of the old building will live on, however. The church will be reusing the pews and the steeple, and recycling the paneling on the walls. Even the flooring will be made into keepsakes such as pen and pencil sets and picture frames. Even so, this Sunday will still be a bitter-sweet service for many members. Generations of families have worshiped in the building, celebrating baptisms, marriages, dedications and births, as well as mourning deaths.

“There have already been some tears shed,” member Judy Butler said. “Some of the older ladies are saying, ‘I know we have to do it, but it’s just hard.’”

“It is hard,” Clouse agreed, “but we need it and we’re looking forward to it.”

For more information about the church, call 931-520-1910 or visit www.facebook/caneyfork.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: Friday, 27 March 2015

CANEY FORK BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY

<http://www.orgsites.com/tn/caneyforkbaptistchurch/>

Caney Fork Baptist Church is the oldest Baptist Church in Putnam County, TN. History handed down for generations trace the beginnings of the Caney Fork Baptist Church to the early 1800's.

The actual beginnings of the church is believed to have started in the log home of Joshua Bartlett on the south bank of the Falling Water River in the Dry Valley area in approximately 1806. After Joshua Bartlett moved his family to a larger log home, the original home was used exclusively for the church and possibly as a school.

The second building to house the church was the larger log home that Joshua Bartlett had previously moved his family to, later owned by Dudley Farley.

The third church building was built on the north side of Falling Water River on land donated by Hyrum Brown near the Brown's Mill. School was also taught in this building.

In 1931 the church was moved from the river bank to it's present location. At that time the old church building was disassembled and the wood was used to build the church at the new location.

In the early 1960's the weatherboard exterior of the church was covered with brick.

In 1998, church members began a building program resulting in the addition of a new wing to the church. The addition included new classrooms, new restrooms, new kitchen and fellowship hall, new nurseries and a new pastor's study. The space between the wings was set up as a prayer garden.

*Read more about the history of Putnam Co., TN & surrounding areas at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>

Joshua Bartlett

b. 1768, NC

d. 22 April 1831, TN

Wives: Winnifred Herring & Winnifred Williams

Father: Henry Bartlett (1731-1822)

Mother: Sarah Crane (1739-1792)

Marker: Browns Mill Cemetery, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN

Inscription: 'In Memory of' PVT Capt Holleman's Co 1 Regt West Tenn Militia War of 1812

Winnifred "Winnie" (Williams) Bartlett

b. 1769, KY

d. 11 May 1852, TN

Husband: Joshua Bartlett

Father: Thomas Edward Williams (1731-1804)

Mother: Jemimah Carter (1742-1820)

Buried: Browns Mill Cemetery, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN

From the Early History of Putnam County, Tennessee, by W. S. McClain, 1925: Joshua Bartlett and wife (Winnie, nee WILLIAMS) moved from Boonesborough, Kentucky with their eight children about the year 1808 and built a cabin on the south bank of Falling

Water, in Putnam County, Tennessee near the location of the concrete bridge on the new highway through there. Later Mr. Bartlett erected a larger and better residence (now occupied by Dudley Farley) near the original cabin, which was then used for several years as a church and school house, but was finally abandoned for a new building on the north bank of Falling River, the site of the present Brown's Mill Church. The Bartlett children were named Daniel, Nathan, Joseph, Edith, Rebecca, Dorcas, Nancy and Penelope. Another daughter, Hester, was born in their new home in 1812, and was the grandmother of Claude Brown, who gave us this information. Mr. Brown's mother, widow of the late Hiram Brown, now in her 87th year, remembers clearly the details of the capture of Daniel Boone's daughters by the Indians, in a raid on Boonesborough, as related by her mother. The original entry of land by Mr. Bartlett embraced 360 acres on Falling Water, the bottom land thickly covered by tall cane. [Ref: (1). White Co, TN Wills and Settlements. (2). War of 1812 Pensioners - Joshua, Winney, no pension, srv Capt. Hollowman's Tennessee Militia, BLW#88729-40-50. Reference Number for service record is 154162 and Bounty Land Warrant No. is 88729, issued under an Act passed Sep. 28, 1850, to his widow Winnie Williams Bartlett. Her Application for Bounty Land, dated January 31, 1852, was accepted November 17, 1852.