

GALILEE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SANGER, TEXAS

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I. CONTEXT

The town of Sanger was founded in 1882 alongside the Santa Fe Railroad, following a trail blazed by cattle drives moving from Fort Worth north to Oklahoma and Kansas. Railroad officials reportedly named the town for the Sanger Bros. who were the best-known merchants in the state since soon after the Civil War.¹ An article in the Dallas Morning News in 1887 described Sanger as “situated on the rich prairies of Denton County, about twenty miles south of Gainesville and about the same distance from Denton, just far enough from county sites to make a great town.”²

The town had been called Huling at first, because it was laid out in 1882 on land owned by Mrs. Elizabeth Huling of Lampasas, TX. Her husband, Thomas Huling, a Texas Revolutionary War veteran, had acquired a lot of land. The Hulings had sold the right-of-way for the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad. Mrs. Huling also sold enough land to lay out the town immediately west of the railroad and she built the first house there.³

J.W. Nicholson and his wife, Catherine Ann Cravens Nicholson, and their two children moved to Sanger in the early 1890s. Catherine Nicholson’s mother had moved to Texas in pre-Civil War days, bringing her children and her slaves with her. She had nine children and had amassed enough land that she gave each child a ranch. Catherine's inheritance, plus additional acreage that her husband bought and added to the original land, became the Nicholson Ranch southeast of Sanger.⁴

John and Catherine Nicholson were white but were said to have brought some black families with them. Other black families soon came to the area in search of work. They established a black community which has endured in Sanger. Those first families and their descendants have worked on farms and ranches and later for the city helping to build roads and infrastructure.⁵

II. OVERVIEW

Galilee Missionary Baptist Church was founded in the year of 1909 and it was located about two and a half miles south of the town of Sanger on the McCarty farm.

John W. McCarty (born 1869, death date unknown)) and his wife, Eliza McCarty (born 1874, death date unknown), who were black, had purchased the 750-acre farm from the Nicholsons in 1900.⁶

The 1900 U.S. Census lists John W. McCarty, 30, and his wife, Eliza, 26, both black and both born in Texas, and their son William, three years old.⁷

Black families established a church on the McCarty farm and may have taught school to their children there, also. However, in 1910, the church officials decided to move into the town of Sanger and establish a church and school so that their children would have a better place to attend school.⁸

The new church building was located at 300 East Willow Street in Sanger. Mary H. Shirley of El Paso sold the lot for the token amount of \$100 to the Missionary Baptist and Education Convention, the State Convention of Texas through which Galilee Missionary Baptist Church had been established. Galilee was a member of the Convention through the Northwestern District Baptist Association.⁹

The organizers of the church were Deacon L. W. D. Mann, Lela Mann, Lewis Holloway, Roger Carter, Mrs. Nelia Turner, Mrs. Mattie Anderson, Mrs. Atlin Mann, Lewis Anderson and Caroline Anderson. Early members of the church were Pink Smith, Eugene Anderson, George Patton, W. McClendon, Fred Sims, Norman Greenwood, E. Dallerhide, B. C. Colbert, M. L. Parramore, Eva Patton, Paul Henderson, and L. E. McGee.¹⁰

The Reverend R. Curry was the first pastor of the church. The first church building was a wood frame structure about 20 feet wide, with a bell tower. Robert Kessee built the church for the sum of \$250.00.

In the early 1920s, the church obtained a bell for the bell tower that rings today at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday morning to announce that it is time to come to church to worship.

Sister Kammie Patten kept the story of how Galilee obtained the bell and shared the story with the members of Galilee by telling the story to the Church Clerk in October 1999, and the clerk recorded the history to be kept in the church files. (All church records show name spelled Cammie Patton, although all other records show the spelling Kammie Patten.)

Rev. W.M. Wilson, who was pastor by then, told the church about a bell that might be for sale over in Bells City, Texas. The church that originally had the bell was destroyed by a tornado. When the church was rebuilt the congregation decided not to remount the bell.

The Mission Women of Galilee (Sister Kammie Patten's Grandmother, Mittie Anderson, was President of the Mission Women) took on the project of raising money to buy the bell. Mr. Dave Mann had a team of mules and agreed to plow the back acreage that belonged to Galilee and plant cotton on it to be sold. The Mission Women, with help from various people in the community, chopped and picked the cotton, then took it to the local Cotton Gin owned by Tom Vaughn and sold the bags of cotton to acquire the money needed to buy the bell. The cost of the bell was \$15.00. Mr. Dave Patton rang the bell regularly until the platform it was mounted on broke down. At this point, the bell was moved to the back of the church.

At one time, several people wanted to buy the bell, and some members of the church wanted to sell it and use the money for other church needs. Fortunately, Sister Patten managed to hold on to it. She and Sister Ollie Parramore had the bell repaired during the time the church was under the leadership of Rev. Keaton in the 1970's.

At this time the City of Sanger allowed Mr. J. P. Haskins to use city equipment to help remount the bell at Galilee. The telephone poles used to build the platform came from Sanger Electric Company. The platform was rebuilt and the bell was returned to the front of the church. The bell was remounted, and Sister Kammie Patten rang it until she became disabled. In 1998 when Galilee began saving for a new building, Mrs. Paxton Gray donated \$25.00 to the Galilee building fund every month for her lifetime and asked in return that the bell be rung every Sunday.¹¹

Sister Kammie Patton, long time member of Galilee, retained a very memorable piece of history for Galilee when she saved the bell.

Sister Patten moved to Sanger from Slidell Texas in 1917. When she became old enough to go to school, she attended school in the old Galilee Missionary Baptist Church because it served as a school for the Negro children in the community during the week days. Her grandfather attended the old church when it was still on the McCarty farm. Sister Patten was born April 3, 1919, and died at the age of 93 on July 15, 2006.¹² She had been a member of the Denton County Historical Society and was the namesake of the Kammie Mae Patten City Park, named by the city of Sanger.

The first church was eventually torn down because it was so worn and no longer large enough to accommodate the growing congregation. Rev. L.E. McGee, who became pastor May 23, 1950, oversaw construction of the second church building built in 1957. The new church was also a wood frame building, similar to the original church. Rev. McGee remained as pastor until the church building was completely paid for. He resigned on August 9, 1959.

Other pastors included the Rev. E.H. Jackson, who was pastor for several months; Rev. O.C. Ervin, Moderator of the board, who filled in as pastor for three years; and Rev. H.W. Winfield, who remained for ten years.

Rev. H.L. Smith of Ft. Worth followed Rev. McGee and remained for three years. Other pastors following were: Rev. Wallace, who remained for three months; Rev. L.G. Austin, who became pastor in the spring of 1963 and remained about one year. He was followed by Rev. B.O. Young, pastor until 1970; Rev. J.B. Keaton, pastor until 1992; and Rev. William Smith, who remained until March of 1998.

By 1997, the second building was outdated and literally falling apart. The congregation in December of 1997 had a membership of approximately 42. Members discussed the need for a new building and Rev. Smith approached Dr. E. L. (Skip) McNeil of First Baptist Church in Sanger for advice about building a new church.

Dr. McNeil recommended that Galilee become a mission church under the First Baptist Church and become a member of the Denton Baptist Association. Through this association, Galilee received donations and support from area churches and became eligible for financial aid to rebuild the church through the Texas Baptist Men.¹³

Construction began on the new church in September 1998 and was completed in December 1998. The new 5,200-square-foot church is brick, with a sanctuary that

will seat 153 people. The church also obtained a residence in November 2002 for use as a parsonage.

The church acquired additional land in 1998, when the Living Center of Texas donated one neighboring lot and Ollie Parramore donated another lot, taking the church property to the corner of Jones Street. The church sits on almost one acre of land (.960 acre).

Church members are proud of their new church, and many volunteers spend many hours caring for the church and the surrounding grounds. Owen Jackson and J.P. Haskins are the primary caretakers for the grounds. The bell has a prominent position on the grounds. It is mounted in a steel tower between the church and parsonage. The Sunday School superintendent or one of the children ring the bell every Sunday morning.

The present pastor, Rev. Reginald T. Logan Sr., became pastor in May 1998. Rev. Logan is a citizen of Denton, Texas. He has served on the Denton Regional Hospital Chaplaincy Board, Denton Housing Authority, is former Vice-President of the Denton County NAACP, and served twice on a Denton County Grand Jury.

God has blessed Galilee Missionary Baptist Church to build a new church and acquire additional land and a parsonage during the past ten years.

Over the years, many members of Galilee have contributed to the development of the Sanger area. . Pink Smith worked at the mill and “Cap” Anderson, grandfather of Kammie Patten, were highly respected members of the community. Dave and Neal Mann were important as helpers at Legear’s Garage. Fred Sims went away to college at Prairie View but returned to be close to his family and friends. He worked at the barber shop and the cleaning establishment. His brother Jacko was the grandfather of Arlene Henderson. Bill and Clint Conley, brothers of Mrs. Bob Kazee, were great baseball players on Sanger’s crack baseball team. Cleve Bell worked at the well-known Noah Batis Stock Farm. Many black people worked on the Nicholson Ranch.¹⁴

III. SIGNIFICANCE:

Galilee Missionary Baptist Church was the first black Baptist church in Sanger. Its establishment served a dual purpose in serving the community as an educational facility and a place for worship.

The members of Galilee demonstrated their allegiance to the United States of America when some of its young men served in the armed forces. During World War I, Mr. Eugene Anderson served and during WWII Mr. J C Kemp and Pete Mann were in the military. Later Charley Haskins, Jr. served in the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War.¹⁵

Rev. Paul Henderson was once an associate Pastor. He later became the Pastor of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Gene Autry, Oklahoma.

The Galilee members have been a contributing part of the community serving in ways such as: members of the Park Board and Planning and Zoning Board, singing at the Sanger Sellabration, caroling at the nursing home and participating in the community Thanksgiving program. Kammie Patten Park was established out of Mrs. Patten's concern for the children in the black neighborhood who needed a place to play. The park was constructed in the early 1990's.¹⁶

Currently, the Women's Mission Group donates to the Friends of the Family, Denton State School, Annual school supply drive, African Orphans and Operation Smile. The women's group also assisted with the Food Pantry and the Chamber of Commerce Angel Tree Program.

IV. DOCUMENTATION

¹ Chambers, Alma L., "How Sanger got its Name," *Sanger Courier*, Sept. 17, 1974.

² "A New Town," *Dallas Morning News*, June 7, 1887.

³ Gray, Eunice Sullivan: *The Story of Sanger*, (published in 1986 for the town's centennial), 1986, pp. 3-4.

⁴ Gray, pp. 33-34.

⁵ Gray, pp. 159-160.

⁶ Northwestern District Baptist Association, 100th Annual Session, Centennial Souvenir program, August 5-8, 1975. Church Files.

⁷ 1900 United States Census, Denton County, Texas; Census Place, Justice Precinct

4, Roll 623 1627; page 94, TR

⁸ Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 79, p 630, County Clerk's office, Denton County Courts Building, 1450 E. McKinney St., Denton, TX.

⁹ Denton County Deed Records, Vol. 119, p 29.

¹⁰ Galilee Missionary Baptist Church cornerstone; Northwestern District Baptist Association, Centennial Souvenir program.

¹¹ Patten, Kammie. Interview with Peggy Haskins, church clerk, October 1999, transcript in church files.

¹² Greenwood, Norman. Interview with Rev. Reginald Logan, Sept. 6, 2008; transcript in church files.

¹³ Church Minutes of First Baptist Church of Sanger, Dec. 11. 1997, copy in Galilee Missionary Baptist church files.

¹⁴ Gray, pp 159-161.

¹⁵ "Salute," *Sanger Courier*, Dec, 4, 2003, p. 3.

¹⁶ Henkle-Wolfe, Peggy, "Sanger Asked to Take Over Park," *Denton Record- Chronicle*, May 18, 2007, p 1.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

"Kammie Mae Patten," *Denton Record-Chronicle*, July 15, 2006, Obits Section, Page 7A.

George Patten Obituary, Feb. 12, 1986. newspaper source unknown, Emily Fowler Library, Denton, City of Denton.

"J. W. Nicholson of Sanger Dies Monday," *Denton Record-Chronicle*, Nov. 28, 1927.

"A Heritage of Growth, Galilee Missionary Baptist Church," (pamphlet) by Peggy Haskins, Church Clerk, Rev. Reginald T. Logan, Sr., Pastor, August 6, 2006, church files.

Letter from Dr. E. L. McNeal, Pastor, First Baptist Church to Shannan Krippner, Living Centers of Texas, Inc., Sept. 28, 1999, church files.

Church Minutes, Galilee Women's Missionary Society Minutes; Mission Objectives for 2008, Jan. 2, 2008. church files.