

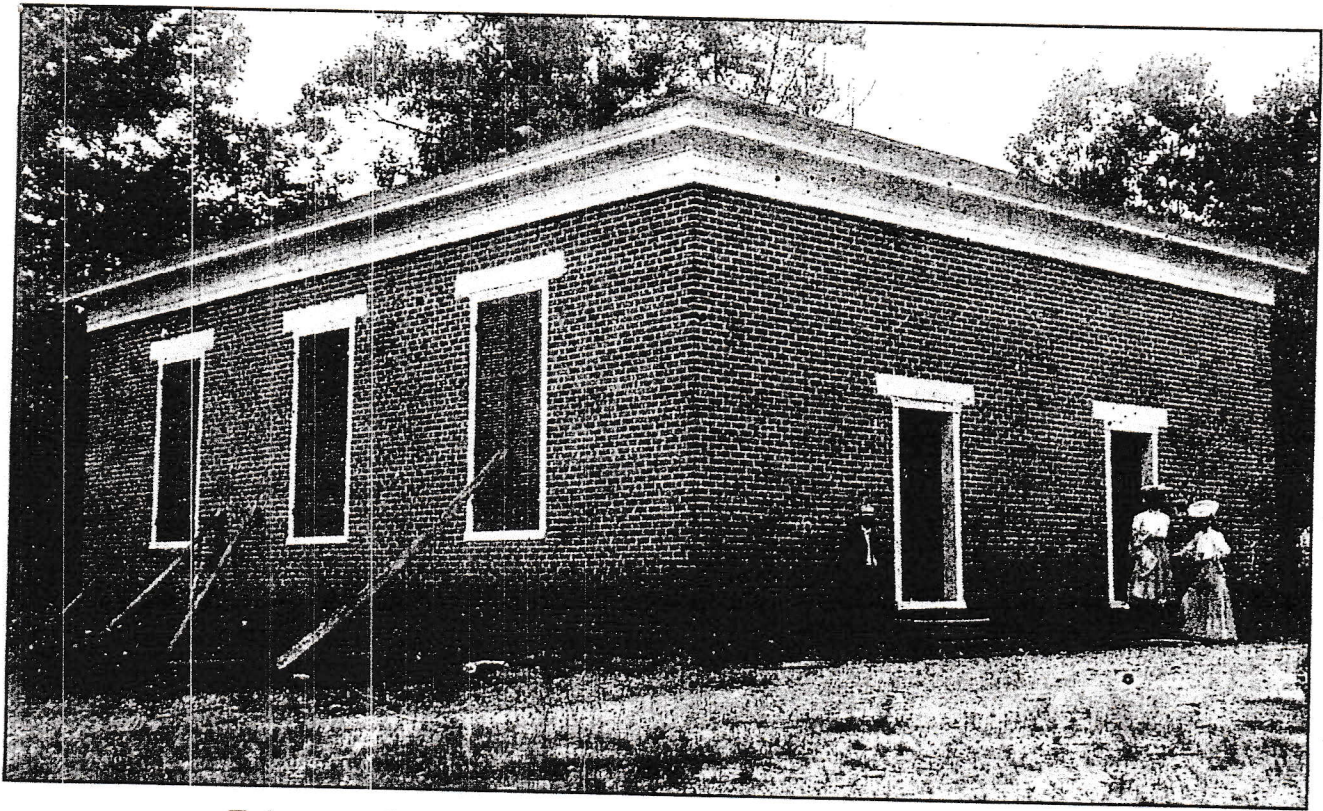
Fairmont Baptist Church

1855-2005



Compiled by

Linda P. Jamison, Clerk



Fairmount Baptist Church at the turn of the Twentieth Century.

Fairmount Baptist Church, near Dillon's Mill, Franklin County, Virginia, was organized April 29th, 1855. It was a succession of the old Blackwater Meeting House, which was constituted in Bedford County (now Franklin) before the Revolutionary War. We have no exact date, but evidently it was between the years of 1760 and 1770.

Semple's "History of the Baptists in Virginia" records this church in the minutes as a member of the First Baptist Association held at E. Craig's Meeting House, Orange County, Virginia, in May 1771, but does not give the date the church was constituted.

Old Blackwater Meeting House was a large log building with a stone chimney taking up almost the entire east end of the house, located about one and one-half miles east of Dillon's Mill, Franklin County, Virginia, on Mirey Branch. This house was used for worship and school for more than three quarters of a century. The minutes of the Strawberry Association for the year 1804, as related

by Semple's History, records Rev. W. Turner as pastor of Old Blackwater Meeting House, with a membership of sixty-five.

We quote below from the First Churchbook of the Fairmount Baptist Church, page one, and from the first item:

"Franklin County, Virginia

Agreeable to our own wish, a Presbytery, consisting of Elders Prichard, Brown, Leftwich, and

Goggin met us at Charity Chapel on Saturday before the 5th Sabbath in April 1855, and after a regular examination, unanimously, agreed to organize us into a church, holding the views of the regular Baptists. We were organized with the fol-

lowing members-Elijah B. Wade, Octavia Wade, Mary J. Wade, John A. Smith, Sarah A. Smith, Elizabeth Claibourn, Elizabeth Turnbull, Ursula Levasey, John Nunley, John Hartman, Lockey Hartman, and Catherine Hensley.

George W. Leftwich, Acting Clerk"



An early congregation

These thirteen are the charter members of the Fairmount Baptist Church.

Charity Chapel was located near the Gogginsville community. During the years 1855-1856, meetings were held at Charity Chapel, Gogginsville, and Retreat, but generally at Gogginsville. A meeting was held at Old Blackwater Meeting House on December 6, 1856 to consider the matter of constructing a House of Worship in the vicinity of what was called "The Three Forks." The meeting

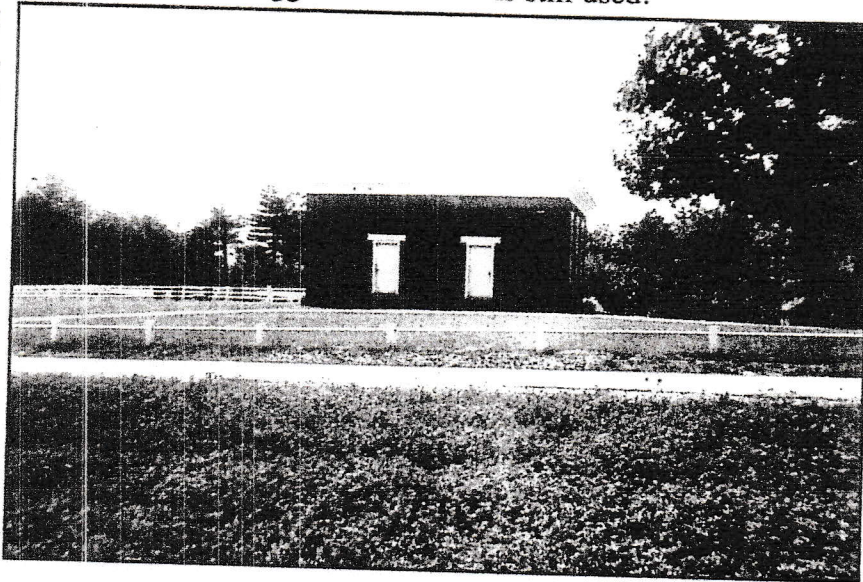
was organized by the appointment of Thomas C. Goggin, Chairman and Elijah B. Wade, Secretary. On motion made that we appoint a Building Committee, which committee shall also act as Trustees for the church. Motion made and carried that seven be the number. The following brethren were appointed to the Building Committee and also as Trustees of the Fairmount Baptist Church: Cyrus Price, Ferdinand Price, Creed T. Webb, David S. Simpson, Elijah B. Wade, David S. Webster, and John A. Smith. Elijah B. Wade was appointed as receiver of funds for said church.

The church was built by Benjamin Deyerle of Roanoke, who owned a plantation in the Coles Creek area. He also built the Piedmont Presbyterian Church in Callaway. The bricks used were made at his own plantation.

Thomas C. Goggin was the first pastor of the Fairmount Baptist Church, having been called to this ministry on June 2, 1855. In this meeting a motion was made and seconded that this church be called Fair Mount. It is thus recorded in the deed in two works. The church



Thomas C. Goggin



A fence was added to the property in 1952.

books include Fair Mount (two words), then Fairmount (one word), then Fairmont (one word). Fairmont was designated as the official spelling in 1980 by the congregation. At present time, Fairmont is still used.

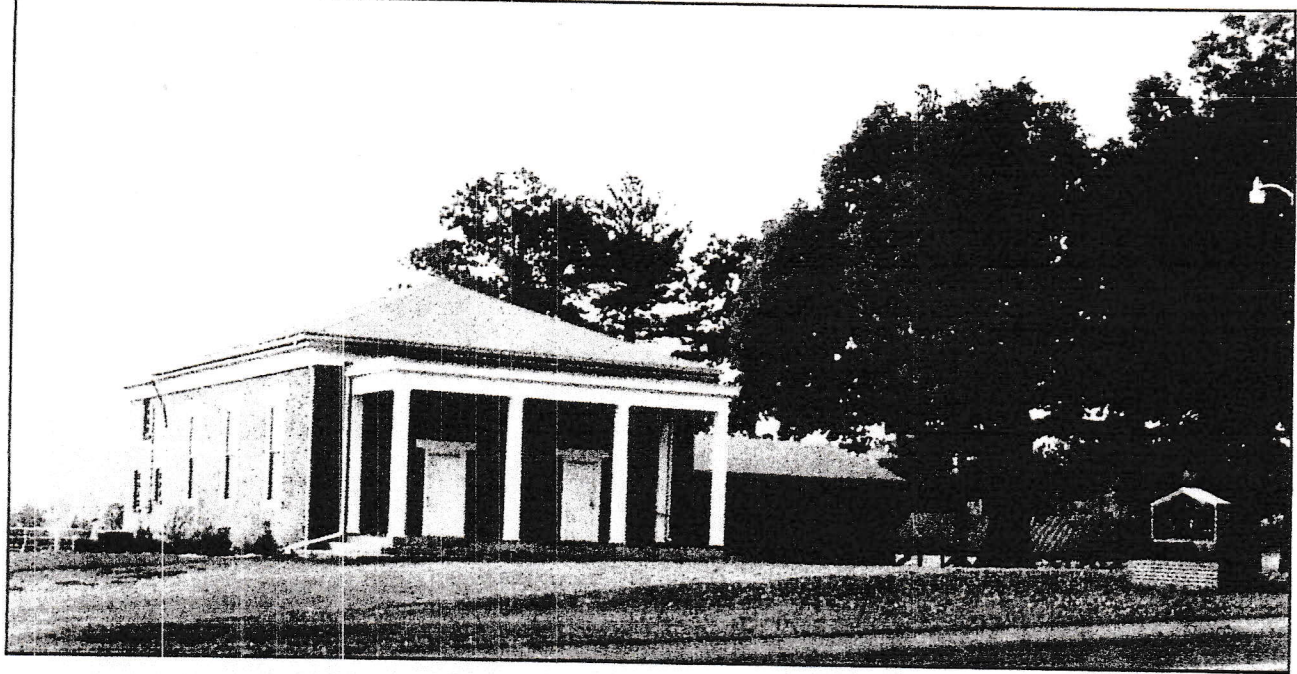
The first deacons for Fairmont Baptist Church were Creed T. Webb, John A. Smith, and John Hartman. They were ordained at Charity Chapel on July 20, 1855. Elijah B. Wade was the first Clerk, with John A. Smith, assistant.

Brother Goggin served Fairmount as pastor for eighteen years, but at two different periods. It was

in the last period of his ministry at Fairmount in October 1873, in which a pastor was to be elected for the ensuing year, that he was asked to retire from the church during the proceedings. (At this time he was serving Fairmount, Boones Mill, and Gogginsville.) On his return to the church he was informed of his election. His compensation was then discussed. He stated that he thought \$150. would be right. The church agreed and he accepted the pastorate. Owing to feeble health and the long distance to be traveled, Brother Goggin offered his resignation to Fairmount Church in September 1876.

The first worship serviced was held in the new House of Worship (Fairmount) on Saturday, December 5, 1857. The first communion service was observed the following day, December 6, 1857, following the 11 o'clock preaching service. Mrs. Cyrus Price and Mrs. Susan Cobbs gave to Fairmount the first Bible and hymn books.

About this time the church had many additions. On coming, these people would relate their experiences and were received as candidates for baptism. The church exercised a very decided type of discipline upon its membership. If there was anything made known in the conduct of a member unbecoming to a child of God, it was considered in the busi-



A late 1980s view of the church, with its porch and addition.

ness meetings held each third Saturday in the month following the worship service. If the member was not present to speak for himself, a committee was appointed to wait upon him and report its findings to the church at its next regular business meeting. This was continued until final disposition of the case. If the member asked for and sought forgiveness, it was graciously granted, but in those cases where forgiveness was neither sought, nor apparently desired, they were dismissed from church membership. At least one case is known where the member, recognizing that the life being lived was out of harmony with the church discipline, asked to be excluded. The discipline violated was that in respect to dancing. It was a well known fact that this person was of the highest moral character in every sense, but delighted to dance, which was not in keeping with the teaching of the Fairmount Church.



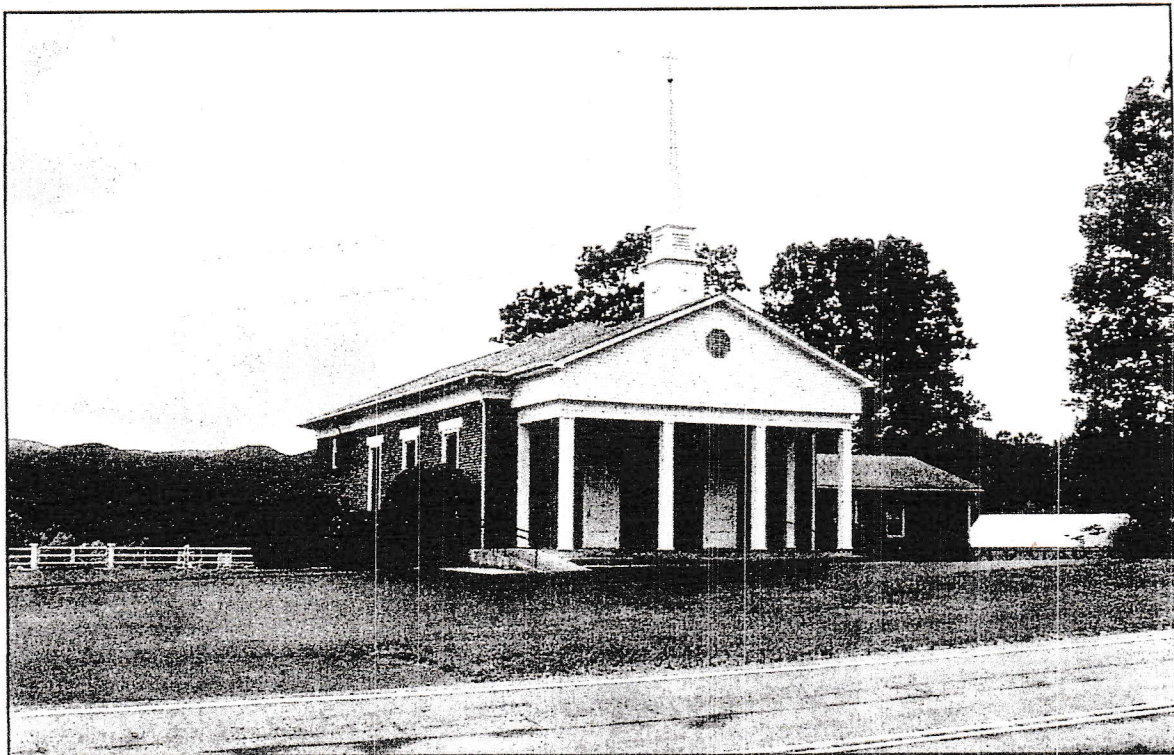
Fairmount Sunday School Class ca. 1918-1919.

The services of the Fairmount Church were generally held the third Saturday and Sunday in each month. On Saturday, the regular worship service was followed by the business session of the church.

The first musical instrument purchased for the church is recorded to have been purchased from Ryland and Lee, on May 15, 1887. Receipt was given by them for same for "The just and full sum of \$85.50."

From Fairmount Church five young people entered into the work of the ministry. They were Wilson Mills, who united with the Fairmount Church November 17, 1878; John W. Mitchell, who was ordained into the gospel ministry January 18, 1880; Samuel A. Naff, who joined Fairmount Church June 17, 1899; Miss Bonny Dillon in 1979; and Michael Jordan in 1990.

For several years, Boones Mill and Gogginsville were "Arms of Fairmount Church." On February 16, 1878, Brother J. W. Abshire was sent as a delegate by the arm of the church at Boones Mill in view of organizing a church at Boones Mill, and asked for the dismissal of nineteen members from Fairmount Baptist Church. The "Arm of the Church" at Gogginsville was dissolved May 18, 1880. Then on December 18, 1880, Brother John Lee Taylor informed the church at Fairmount of his intention of building a Baptist Church at Rocky Mount, Virginia.



Fairmont Church at the dawn of the Twenty-first Century.

He asked the cooperation of Fairmount Church. The first Sunday School in the Fairmount Church was organized April 9, 1859.

The following men from Fairmount Baptist Church constitute a partial list of those serving in "The War Between The States:"

(Hambricks's Company)	(S. Hale's Company)
Benjamin B. Webb	Eli W. Akers
John T. Smith	Joseph Overfelt
George Gibson	John Hensley

Until a few years ago, two old wooden "Style Blocks" stood as landmarks on the church grounds. These were used by the women who rode horseback to the church in order to mount and dismount from their horses. The husbands usually attended their wives in hitching their horses to the sturdy limbs of the giant oaks which then surrounded the church, but it was the young men who met their girls at the "Style Block," holding the reins of the bridle until she had dismounted. While he was hitching the horse, she removed the long, full, gathered, black riding skirt and waited for him to come back and escort her to the church door (which he always did, sometimes going in and sitting beside her during the service).

The building completed in 1857 has the original floor and balcony. The balcony was used in the beginning for seating the members who were "of color." Fairmont had members in 1855 that were slaves and free blacks. Many stayed for several years after the civil war was over.

We are indebted to Mrs. L.C. Hall, wife of a former pastor, for the pulpit furniture. It was through her untiring efforts and contacts with the following people that these were possible: the middle pulpit chair was given by Hampton L. Dillon in memory of his father and mother, Mr. And Mrs. Jesse Dillon. The right pulpit chair was given by the O.B. Jamison family in memory of their parents, Mr. And Mrs. O.B. Jamison. The left pulpit chair was given by Mrs. Cleora Saul Hunt in memory of brothers and sister, and parents, Mr. And Mrs. T.E. Saul. The communion table was presented by the Parker Jamison family in memory of the husband and father, Mr. Parker C. Jamison. The chair to the right of the communion table was presented by Mr. Harry Saul. The chair to the left of the communion table was presented by Mr. John Peter Saul, Jr., in memory of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Peter Saul. The pulpit was presented by the young people's group of the Fairmount Baptist Church. The flower stand to the right was given by Mrs. Cyrus Dillon in memo-



A 1960s gathering.

ry of her father, Rev. S.B. Moses, a former pastor. The flower stand on the left was presented by Mr. and Mrs. Hillard Thomas, in memory of their daughter, Eleanor. The collection plates were presented by Rev. and Mrs. L.C. Hall. The picture of Christ was presented by Rev. and Mrs. T. Threatt. The church chairs and table previously used, along with the pulpit Bible now in service, were presented by the family of Mr. Ferdinand Price in memory of their father. In 1947 the church was wired for electric power with Brothers Cyrus Dillon and Hampton Dillon paying the bill. Hollace Bowman later wired the chandelier for the church. (We do not know the history of the chandelier in our church, but it has been here prior to the 1900's). The Sunday School rooms were wired by brother Harry Saul and Tinsley E. Webster. Previous to the electric lights, brother O.B. Jamison had given the church a carbide lighting system.

In 1952 considerable improvement was made on the church grounds by the removal of trees, grading of the yard, fencing the cemetery, placing the cement posts and iron rod fence about the lot by the road.

In 1957 the Sunday School rooms and basement were added to the rear of the building. The sanctuary was redone in 1968 and the original furnishings were replaced. The porch and picnic shelter were added in 1971. The fellowship hall was built in 1973. The parking lot was paved in 1990. A sound system was installed in 1991, and upgraded in 2004. The steeple was added in 2001. In 2004 a recreation/playground area was established.

The Annual Homecoming, on the third Sunday in July, has been a feature of joyous anticipation by

many through the years. Many former members, old acquaintances, and friends from far and near come together in Christian fellowship. Brother J. Ernest Jamison was historian for these meetings. He always had an active part in the program for the day, giving Fairmount's History as a most interesting feature. Much credit is due him in recording and preserving a great portion of her history. His copy of church records was used for this report.

Visitors are always welcome at Fairmont. The following men have served this church as pastors for such terms as indicated:

Rev. Thomas Goggin—June 1855-May 1866

Rev. C.W. Wood—May 1866-February 1867

Rev J.W. Stine—February 1867—November 1867

Rev. T.N. Saunders—December 1867-February 1869

Rev. T.E. Reynolds—February 1869-October 1869

Rev. Thomas C. Goggin—November 1869-October 1876

Rev. John Lee Taylor—November 1876-October 1880

Rev. Gabriel Wheeler—December 1880-February 1891

Rev. R.D. Haymore—March 1891-October 1892

Rev. John W. Wade—May 1893-December 1902

Rev. W.M. Royal—June 1903-August 1908

Rev. W.L. Naff—August 1908-April 1909

Rev. F.P. Robertson—April 1909-December 1913

Rev. John W. Wade—December 1913-November 1917

Rev. H.H. Martens—December 1917-June 1922

Rev. W.P. Brooks—July 1922-September 1923

Rev. S.B. Moses—May 1924-December 1925

Rev. George W. Ferrell—February 1927-September 1935

Rev. L.W. Gammon—1936-December 1943

Rev. Walter S. Tillman—September 1944-November 1946

Rev. L.C. Hall—February 1947-November 1949

Rev. T. Threatt—December 1950-April 1967

Rev. Luther Vann—Interim—April 1967-January 1968

Rev. A.V. Greene, Jr.—January 1968-June 1970

Rev. James Wood—August 1970-July 1975

Rev. Michael Burke—January 1976-September 1977

Rev. Samuel Young—January 1978-August 1978

Rev. Gene Andrews—September 1978-November 1979

Rev. Jack Corvin—Interim—January 1980-January 1982

Rev. Earl Dodson—Interim—February 1982-December 1982

Rev. Leonard Castleman—January 1983-June 1988

Rev. Tom Toler—Interim—July 1988-January 1989

Rev. Scott Davis—January 1989-May 1991

Rev. Robert J. Schneider, Jr.—October 1991-December 1997

Rev. William Hayhurst—July 1998-June 1999

Rev. Harold Draper—Interim—1999-July 2000

Rev. Alfred Major—July 2000-September 2002

Rev. John Cochran—Interim—August 2003-February 2005

Rev. Leonard Castleman—February 2005-present

The Oak Tree Remembers Fairmont

At the Blackwater meeting house Baptists met to agree to construct a church at three forks, near me. Then I was not quite as big around but, like Fairmount, firmly rooted in the ground. With thirteen charter members, April 1855 the church organized, and my branches quite alive. Thomas Goggin conducted first worship December 1857 and songs echoed thru the hills like a chorus from Heaven. Now if early members failed to toe the mark, they were excluded from worship and left in the dark. The offense today seems only a whim, for then even dancing was considered a sin. Preaching on the first and third Sunday, you see We shared the pastor with others, and he preached at all three. We had style blocks for the ladies to dismount from the steed and at Homecomings past, served as tables indeed. The boys then led the horses over to me, and fastened the reins to the branches of this sturdy oak tree. Ninth of April 1859, the weather was still a little cool, but a great day to organize the first Sunday School. The gallery was used to seat people of color became Sunday School rooms for little girls and the fellows. I've shaded many veterans with the leaves on my arms from the war of the revolution to the past Desert Storm. May 1887, there was quite an event, the first musical instrument-to the church it was sent. The congregation felt it was really quite nifty, they had paid the whole sum of eighty-five fifty. The 1st World War had the country in quite a lurch and a par-

sonage was purchased with the Boones Mill church.

1947 with Sandy Ridge, Boones Mill, and Cedar Bluff preaching twice a month was not quite enough. L.C. Hall preached the first Sunday P.M. And in the morning third Sunday I saw you and him. Homecoming that year, basket lunch under the trees. The Broadman Hymnal was selected, for a melodious breeze. Wood stoves were replaced in the year forty-nine. The oil heaters were shiny and we thought them real fine. In 50, Sandy Ridge withdrew from our field, Rev. Threatt preached one morning and two evenings for real. Tables built for Homecoming in fifty-one. Our first power mower cut the grass, before that was done. We built rooms on the rear in fifty-nine. Sunday School at Fairmont had begun to shine. The sanctuary remodeled in sixty-eight. With new windows and pews, and we all sat up straight. 71 brought the porch and a new picnic shelter, so now, at



Church members in the 1970s.

Homecoming, no one would swelter. In seventy-three the fellowship hall was built and at the terrific suppers, we were stuffed to the hilt. The parsonage was built in seventy-five. Remember, most of you were alive. Next January Pastor Mike Burke moved in. He preached full time at Fairmont and against all sin. In 77, water in the creek was real cold, and immersion was consistent with the days of old. We would have to "gather at the river" no more, for a baptistry was installed under the pulpit floor. 87 air conditioning the Sunday School and the fellowship hall, new lights in the sanctuary and parking lot, by fall. 89 saw the paving of the gravel parking lot. My roots were covered, so I began to get hot.

I've witnessed the early struggles and triumphs of the past seen many days of glory and the year went by real fast. As toddlers you have played and passed beneath this tree, too soon you were enrolled in Adult Sunday School three. I've shaded thirty-five pastors, in your 144 years I have seen many of you smile, and some have shed some tears. I hope to go on near you as I complete my role. Continue to glorify Jesus and rejoice in your soul.

—Bill Payne, 1999

Memories of Fairmont Baptist Church by Marie Jamison Goggin

A flood of memories comes to mind as I think of this time and place. I remember several pastors and their wives who were here. I especially remember many dear people who have gone

on to be with the Lord—many of whom I think of every time I come in the church and almost feel I can see them sitting in their regular place in the pews. It is very special to me to see many of my children, grandchildren, and one great-grandchild here in the church who love the Lord and are taking an active part in the growth, to reach out to bring people to Christ long after I have gone to my heavenly home.

On a lighter note, Homecoming always makes me think of lemons. Dozens and dozens we squeezed every year to make old-fashioned homemade lemonade. We squeezed two cases each year before James Clark Jamison, Senior, my children's Father, passed away in 1994. I think our children got sick and tired

of the lemonade tradition. Clark loved Homecoming and bought an Army lister bag with four spigots and hung it in the tree where the flower bed is now located. When we had no air conditioning and sweat was running down your back, that lemonade sure tasted good.

I will never forget the pot-bellied stove that sat where the piano now stands. Few people sat in the back of the church in those years.

This was supposed to be limited to one hundred fifty words, but I found it hard to stay within my limits as I had about 50 years of memories. It is my prayer that this church will be a shining light in this community for another 150 years.

What Fairmont Baptist Church Means to Me

Memories tend to fade over time if their impact is not forceful. Fairmont Baptist Church has given me memories that must have been vigorous, because they still linger for me. Those recollections plus my personal experiences at this church have helped me to solidify my faith in Christ. That faith itself is the meaning that all Christians seek and cherish.

Experiences and associations at Fairmont have been invaluable. One memory that stands out was my acceptance of Christ as my Savior when I was twelve years of age. My baptism was in Blackwater

River near Clark and Marie Jamison's house. A few other memories are: week-long revivals, Sunday School classes held in the sanctuary which was divided by curtains, heat from wood stoves, Homecoming on the third Sunday of July, teaching Sunday School, attending church with my mother and father and later with my own family, gathering under the big oak tree before and after church, and many others too numerous to mention.

As we know, a church is the people who attend and not the building. The people at Fairmont have been very meaningful to me by providing support, giving advice, offering encouragement and being very friendly. I can't forget Cyrus, Edith, Rev. Gammon, Rev. Threatt, Clark, William, C.T., Harry, John, Sarah, George, Clara, Miss Sally, Miss Daisy, Parker, Miss Callie, and the current membership.

Fairmont has meant a family involvement since the founding of the church. It is said that Rev. Thom Goggin, my great, great grandfather, was helpful in getting the church under way. Dr. and Janie Dillon, my grandparents, attended; my parents, Cyrus and Edith Dillon were members; and my own family, Leedy, Cy, Beth, Charlotte, and Bonny were members. This family involvement is very meaningful to me because they, through Fairmont Church, have had a profound impact on my life by introducing me to Christ.

— C.I. Dillon, Jr.