

Corinth United Baptist Church

As Remembered by Janis Mason Owens

I joined Corinth United Baptist Church in 1952 when I was 11 years old. I remember my grandparents, Fielding and Stella Mason, walking at least five miles on the third Saturday of each month to go to church. Meetings were only held one day per month and that was during the day. I know at one time Sunday School classes were held at the church, but I did not get to attend any of those classes.

In the wintertime we didn't attend very much because it was too cold to have to walk so far. Sometimes someone would come by and pick us up in a car, or another church member would come get us because we never owned a car.

Some of the wonderful old people that attended church during the '40s and '50s when I went there were my grandparents, Aunt 'Emmy' Cross, Aunt "Lassie" Anderson, Belle and Wiley Anderson, Enmon and Kizzie Owens, and Dilmon and Talitha Owens (who later became my in-laws). Walter and Pearl Owens, Chester and Reba Anderson, Herbert and Tincie Phillips would come from Indiana to attend church when they could. Later, Chester and Reba moved to Indiana and would be able to come back and attend when they could. There were many others, but I can't remember — but they were a great influence on my Christian life.

We only had "The Lord's Supper" one time a year. Since Corinth was a United Baptist, we took the bread and "wine" (grape juice), but we also had a "foot washing." This was a very moving and spiritual experience. There was a pitcher and bowl used for this and I believe that it is still in existence. One time I remember my grandmother talking about Aunt Kizzie Owens had her granddaughters wash her feet. She only had the two granddaughters and now both are deceased.

Some of the pastors I remember were Rev. W.S. Watson, Rev. Columbus Adkins, Rev. Leon Byrd, Rev. Finley Hatfield, Rev. Fred Gibson and Rev. Harry Lee Sharpe served the church. I think Harry was the last pastor at the church.

During World War II, mattresses and quilts were made in the upstairs by the ladies of the community. I was told that these materials were donated by the government. Also, the men had a lodge that was called "Junior Order of United American Mechanics," which had been formed in 1853.

The church never had indoor plumbing. A table in the back of the church had a water bucket with a dipper. I guess everyone drank from the dipper. The restrooms were outside, and they are still standing — not the original ones — but they have been there for a while. A coal stove stood in the aisle for heat. In later years, electric heaters were installed on the walls for heat. There was



Figure 1: Janis Mason Owens, about the age she joined Corinth United Baptist Church

no carpet and no padded seats. And, of course, no electric fans. We used the hand-held fans that had religious pictures on them, and some even had handmade fans.

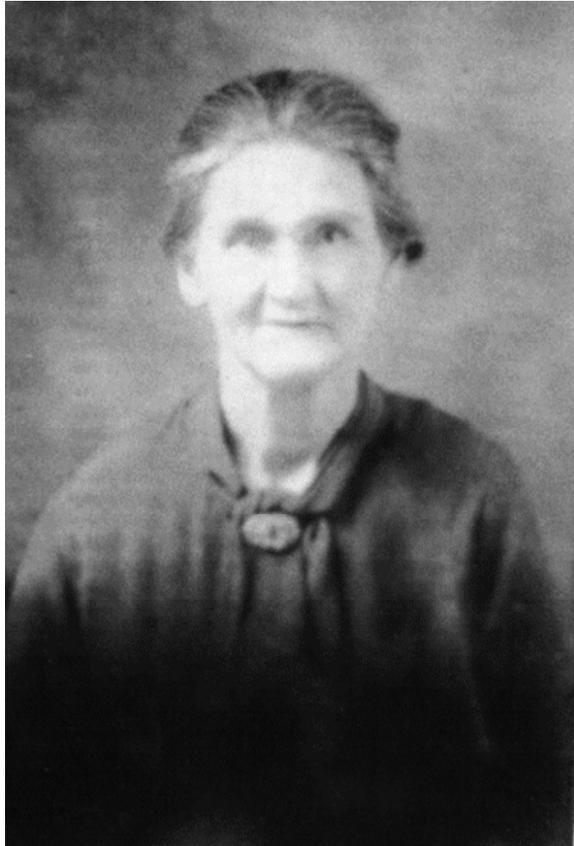


Figure 2: 'Aunt' Emmy Cross, faithful member of Corinth Church. When she got "happy in the Spirit," the only sound she made was tapping of her feet.



Figure 3: Fielding and Stella Mason, grandparents of Janis Owens, and faithful members of Corinth United Baptist Church.

In the late '70s or early '80s, ceiling fans were installed. The windows were open in the summertime and people, especially men, would stand outside to listen to the preaching and singing.

The church did not have a piano for years — at least during the time I attended. At a later date an old piano was donated by the Antioch Church, when they bought a new one. I can't remember anyone in the church playing a guitar, so we sang without music. Someone usually had a tuning fork to get us all in time.

When new pews were needed at the church, members of the church donated money to build the pews. Each pew was handmade by a local carpenter. When the building was torn down these pews were given to family members, in remembrance of their parents or family.