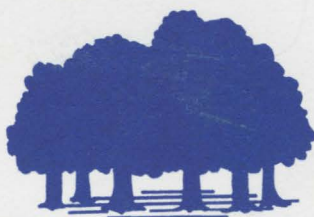


How Firm A Foundation

*A History Of
Blue's Grove Baptist Church
1939-1989*



Frankie Ann Nichols
T. Wade Nichols

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Published by
Blue's Grove Baptist Church
Red Brush Road
Surry County, North Carolina

Chapter One

The Church Organizes

The people of the Red Brush area had long-standing church ties in most cases. Through marriage and moving, many of the citizens were members of Baptist congregations at Piney Grove, White Plains, New Hope and Dobson, all older churches established in the late 19th century, as well as churches of other denominations in the area.

Because of the distances and conditions of the roads in the area during the depression, traveling from Red Brush to White Plains or Dobson could be a major undertaking. All of the missionary Baptist churches in the area were at least four miles away, sometimes further since the roads often followed very different paths than today. There were no motor cars or trucks on most of the farms, and even those who might have hitched up the horse or mule to a wagon would have found the roads pretty tough going.

Some were concerned that they weren't able to attend worship services on a regular basis. One such family was that of Rufus F. Haymore. Ms. Cora Isaacs Haymore remembers that during the late 30's the local mail carrier was the Rev. Charlie Simmons. One day in 1939 he stopped to talk with Brother Haymore. The two men agreed that a church was needed in the settlement. Mr. Haymore and several of his neighbors were members of Piney Grove Baptist Church, which was a good distance away. He began to discuss the idea with others, and the interest grew.

In the spring of 1939, a Sunday School was begun in Redbrush. The group gathered and asked permission to meet in a grove of Oak trees on a hill top of the farm owned by Mr. & Mrs. H.S. Blue. Sunday afternoon lessons were taught by adults in the community, and an arbor was constructed of brush in the middle of the grove for shelter.

Mrs. Cora Haymore's uncle, Rev. Emory Callaway, came from Fieldale in Virginia every two weeks and preached after the Sunday School sessions during the spring and early summer. Other preachers, including Rev. Charlie Simmons, also visited the grove on Sundays and held services. And while all were not Missionary Baptists, there was a strong interest by many in establishing a new Missionary Baptist church in the community.

Authors' Notes:

This history is comprised of information taken from the minutes and records of Blue's Grove Baptist Church, as well as from the personal histories and recollections as told to the authors.

We would like to thank those members and friends who have shared their memories and photographs for this publication.

We would also like to thank Michael DiPerrio for book design and production assistance.

This informal effort by the people of the Red Brush area was of great importance. It signaled the beginning of a spiritual community that was to have a lasting impact on all the families of the area. It was a community that shared beliefs and concerns. This spiritual community was built around families and individuals who would remain a part of its life for decades to come.

The choice of meeting places was also important. The grove of trees on the H.S. Blue farm was a convenient meeting point, and the spot also offers a dramatic view of the countryside of Surry County. The present church was built adjacent to that shady grove, which still stands to the North of the sanctuary. The grove was home to the spirit of the early church meetings, and that spirit of place and faith has remained with the congregation and buildings ever since.

In a short time, formal efforts began to organize and establish a church based on those early Sunday School meetings. The Minutes of Blue's Grove Baptist Church were begun on July 2nd, 1939, the date that the church was founded. According to the first entry by Roy Simmons, who was elected as Clerk of the Church that day, a full day of services and meetings were held at Blue's Grove that Sunday. After Sunday School a sermon was delivered by the Rev. G. A. Tucker, with music by the Calvary Quartet. Dinner was served on the grounds, and there was more singing and preaching. Mr. A.V. West, an official of the Surry Baptist Association spoke to the group about the duties and responsibilities that came with organizing a congregation, followed by a short sermon by Rev. A. S. Hale.

At 2:15 that afternoon, Blue's Grove Baptist Church was organized with 21 charter members from the community. The charter members include: Roy Simmons, Fannie Simmons, Walter Draughn, Bettie Draughn, Frank Draughn, Archie Draughn, Irene Draughn (Simpson), Sadie Draughn (Martin), Sanford Eades, Ura Eades, Thelma Eades, Lorene Eades, Fannie Joyce, Vertie Wilson, Harvey Mosley, Pearl Mosley, Evelyn Simmons, W.E. Park, R.F. Haymore, Lacy Dollyhigh and Jeanette Dollyhigh. (Because they were unable to attend that first service, the records show that Lacy and Jeanette Dollyhigh were officially admitted as charter members on the following Sunday, July 9th, 1939.)

After organizing the church, agreeing upon affiliation with the Surry Baptist Association, the group turned its attention to how it would be governed. In addition to naming Mr. Simmons its Clerk, the Church

elected three men to serve as Deacons. The first Board of Deacons at Blue's Grove Baptist Church was made up of J.S. Eades, W. E. Parks, and Rufus F. Haymore.

Following the election of officers, the new church heard a sermon from Rev. Lonnie Flemming, pastor for many years at Antioch and Oak Grove Baptist Churches. Following Rev. Flemming, the church officially called upon Rev. Delmar D. Hodges to serve as its first pastor. Rev. Hodges would figure greatly in the life of the church during the next twenty-five years.

The remainder of the year was eventful for the new church. On July 9th, the church met in conference following the service and elected three trustees to oversee the business matters of the church. They were Walter F. Draughn, J. Sanford Eades, and W. E. Parks. One week later, on July 16th, the church elected the first delegates to the Surry Baptist Association: Roy Simmons, J. Sanford Eades, and Harvey Mosley.

The church also voted to begin work on a permanent sanctuary that would take the place of the arbor in the grove. Unfortunately, the effort to build the new church's home would also claim one of its leaders. On July 30, 1939, Rufus Haymore died of a stroke while moving logs and lumber that were to be used in the building of the sanctuary.

The first series of Revival Meetings was held from October 15th to the 22nd that fall in 1939. Meeting in the grove, Rev. Hodges led the meetings each evening. During the Revival, the church grew stronger in its conviction of the spirit, and in the numbers of faithful added to its rolls of membership. Those accepted for membership from other congregations were Anna Branch, Arthur Hutchens, Floyd Badgett, Anna Ree Badgett and Laura Isaacs.

Eleven persons also came forth to be baptized and join the congregation. Those were Lula Badgett, Cora Blue, Ollie Hutchens, Daisy Hutchens, Howard Gillespie, Ila Gillespie, Ramon Wilson, Dixie Watson, Cora Haymore, Cora Bell Eades, and Edith Freeman. A large group attended that first baptism service, held at Fisher River above the County Home.

Later that fall, after all the harvest was complete, the church met in the grove for a Thanksgiving service on November 23, 1939. Dinner was served on the ground at noon. That afternoon, an auction sale was held

for the benefit of the church building fund. Proceeds from this auction amounted to \$37.36, a relatively large sum when we allow for inflation.

Ray Riggs remembers attending the benefit auction that Thanksgiving Day. "Claude Branch had brought along a rabbit that he had caught in his rabbit gum. That rabbit got everyone's attention, especially all the kids. I remember that Alice Parks finally bought the rabbit for 15¢."

Though the church was actively raising funds to support its new building, the congregation very clearly demonstrated its concern for others through special mission offerings during that first year. A special collection for the North Carolina Baptist Hospital was taken on November 12, 1939, with \$16.69 raised for the hospital. A special Thanksgiving offering of \$4.37 was also taken up for the Thomasville Orphanage (since renamed Baptist Children's Home of Thomasville). Mission support, both home and foreign missions, continues on at Blue's Grove with offerings, special educational programs, prayer meetings, and other activities each year.

Chapter Two The Church Builds

Shortly after the organization of Blue's Grove Baptist Church, the members began to think about a permanent building for year-round services. Work had begun in July to cut timber and prepare the lumber for building after the harvest work was finished on all of the member's farms.

Money for the new church building was a major concern for the new congregation. While many of the farmers were doing fairly well, most had families to support. And the area was only beginning to come out of a very rough economic period for both the farmers and the local manufacturers.

A committee of men and women in the church was assembled to solicit funds for the new building. In addition to Rev. D. D. Hodges, the committee included Mrs. Bettie Draughn, Mr. and Mr. J. Sanford Eades, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Simmons, Mrs. Cora Blue, and Mr. George Badget.

Donations of all sizes were made through the committee and others in the congregation. Gifts ranging from ten cents to fifty dollars were collected during the effort, with contributors including members, friends, neighbors, relatives of members, and area businesses from Mt. Airy to Elkin.

Major gifts for the new church included gifts of land, timber and sawing, and a piano. H. S. and Cora Blue donated the land on which to build the church. Mrs. Blue also donated money to help purchase building supplies.

Walter Draughn and Sanford Eades both donated all of the exterior siding needed to finish the church. Logs were cut from several member's farms to provide framing and flooring for the new building, and those logs were cut into boards and beams by J. McKinley McCraw and Charles Newman, who donated their services. Albert Eades presented the church with a piano to provide music for the services.

Construction started in the fall of 1939, a peaceful time in Surry County, but a period when much of the rest of the world was plunging into a bitter war.

Roy Simmons volunteered to head up the work of building the church, and decided not to grow crops that summer in order to devote more time to the construction effort. Members came by to help Mr. Simmons on different days with all of the framing, roofing and finish carpentry required.

One current member who did some work on that first building was the young Ellis "Buddy" Haymore. Nearly fifty years later, Buddy Haymore would serve the church as Building Committee Chairman on the new sanctuary completed near the end of 1988.

The work on the new sanctuary was completed in December, just in time for a Christmas service to be the first worship service held in-doors. Buddy Haymore remembers that Roy Simmons was working on the inside, putting up wallboard, one night while the young people were rehearsing the Christmas Play. Worshipping in a new sanctuary that Christmas may have given new meaning to the story of Christ's birth for the new congregation.

On Easter Sunday, March 26, 1940, the formal dedication of the new sanctuary of Blue's Grove Baptist Church was planned for the afternoon, after dinner on the grounds. There would be special singing by the Glee Club of Beulah High School and others, the laying of a cornerstone, along with a special dedication sermon and representatives of the Surry Baptist Association. But even after the hardship of meeting in the grove for months, this service had to be postponed because of a fairly heavy snow.

Sunday School and the 11 o'clock service were held as scheduled for those who could make it to the church. The formal ordination of the first deacons took place that morning as planned. And since many had come prepared with their dinner's, the group decided to bring dinner indoors. Several who were present remember that benches were moved together, with the food placed in the center. And while the group enjoyed the fellowship and the warmth of their new church building on that cold spring Sunday, the church voted to postpone the formal dedication until later that summer when everyone would be able to attend.

Mrs. Lela Hodges, wife of Rev. D.D. Hodges, remembers that even with the bad weather, "Everyone really enjoyed that special service. But the weather worried me. I remember that Delmar and I stayed on until everyone else had gone toward home. We ended up helping pull some

people up the hill with a tractor on the way back to our place since the roads were getting pretty bad."

The early church met for worship in a one room building, with no Sunday School class rooms. We do not have any pictures of the interior of the church, but it was a simple building, as was true of almost every church in Surry County at that time. There were two front doors, with glass panels, and two aisles that led to the front of the church. The windows were of clear glass.



Sunday morning, Blue's Grove Baptist Church in the early 1940's.

The church was heated by a wood stove in the center of the single room, with a long pipe running to the outer wall. During colder weather, the fire would be started before services began. Will McCraw recalls "I was a little boy at the time, but I remember one day during preaching when a big coal fell out of that stove. I saw Martha Nichols quietly reach down and pick it up with her bare hands and quickly throw it back in the stove to keep it from burning the floor. I was really impressed."

There would be various remodeling and addition projects over the coming years as the church grew and developed. Three different

remodelings would add Sunday School rooms and a basement, and the exterior of the church building would be changed from white clapboards to red brick, along with the addition of stained glass windows.

Each effort to add something to the church was a major undertaking that involved almost everyone in some way. Whether it was taking care of raising necessary funds, donating goods and services, or helping out with the actual construction task, the work at Blue's Grove was shared by many.

But even with all those different projects to remodel, add rooms, and keep up with the growth of Blue's Grove Church, that first church building would remain the heart of the sanctuary for the first fifty years. Constructed of locally grown timber, built by the hands and hammers of its own dedicated members, the church building at Blue's Grove was as sturdy as the congregation of people who gathered inside for worship.



Blue's Grove, after services, in 1952. 1942

Chapter Three Building An Enduring Church

After the completion of the new church building at Blue's Grove, the young congregation continued to grow in numbers and in the spirit. We have a picture of some of the early years of the church from the minutes kept by the clerks.

On January 13, 1940, Clerk Roy Simmons recorded that Rev. Hodges preached on the text "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified," from Romans 8:30.

In the church business meeting that followed the sermon, the record shows that "Four members were given the right hand of fellowship that had received their letters from Piney Grove Baptist Church, they being Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Badgett, Anna Branch and Arthur Hutchens.

"Brother Dixie Watson was placed in nomination for a third deacon, and was unanimously elected to succeed Brother R. F. Haymore (deceased)." Dixie Watson would serve the church as a deacon until his death in 1981.

Later in 1940, on October 26th, Mr. Simmons recorded this minute of the service: "A most wonderful sermon was delivered by our Pastor. His reading was the 13th chapter of Mathew. It was a parable of a man sowing good seed in his field, but, while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. His text was "Let both grow together until harvest. Then I will say to the reapers gather ye first the tares in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." For a congregation of families living on working farms, the parable from Mathew may have held extra meaning for people working to sort the good from the bad in their daily lives.

During the first decade, regular Sunday School services were held each week. Since there was a shortage of ministers for area Baptist churches, most congregations shared a pastor with at least one other church. For this reason, preaching services were not usually held every Sunday morning by most of the smaller country churches in western North Carolina. This was a continuation of the traditional Circuit Rider

preachers who had brought the first church services to some of the more rural areas of the Appalachian mountains and the great plains region.

Blue's Grove was the first church Delmar D. Hodges served as pastor, and his involvement with the church would extend over three decades. Mrs. Hodges, looking back at that period, says "I have such fond memories of those first years at Blue's Grove. This was Delmar's first church, and Blue's Grove was just beginning. I remember that all the people were very close, just as in a large family. Blue's Grove always felt like home to my heart."

Rev. D. D. Hodges answered the call of the ministry at a time when pastors were in very short supply. He was originally licensed to preach by Oak Grove Baptist Church in the Beulah community. A while later he was fully ordained as a Baptist minister at Antioch Baptist Church in 1939.

Soon after accepting the position as pastor at Blue's Grove Baptist Church, Rev. Hodges also was called as pastor at Antioch and at Oak Grove. This meant that each of the three churches held preaching services on one weekend each month, with services on Saturday night and Sunday morning.

The small church at Blue's Grove continued to grow gradually during the forties. Many of the families on neighboring farms were drawn into the congregation, and most are still represented in the church as it celebrates its 50th anniversary year. Several professions of faith and baptisms helped to increase the rolls of the church, and others living nearby also chose to transfer their memberships from other churches some distance away.

Pauline Dollyhigh Beasley remembers that during those early years, it was customary for the church pastor to have lunch with one of the member families after each of the Sunday morning services. This was an informal and very pleasant way for the pastor and his wife to visit in each family's home, becoming better acquainted with the children and parents. This informal custom survived at Blue's Grove well into the 60's, after regular weekly preaching services and mid-week services meant that the pastor had a great deal more work and more opportunity to meet with church members.

Another of Pauline Beasley's memories includes "one Sunday, sometime in the early 40's, I remember that we had a special Sunday School class picnic with our teacher, Archie Draughn. It was shortly after he had entered the army and was to leave for service in World War II." Another member of that Sunday School class, Pauline McCraw Nichols,

remembers "I received a Christmas card from Archie that year. Cards weren't that common back then, and I was very impressed that Archie remembered his Sunday School class back at Blue's Grove."

The war in Europe and Japan was one of the few intrusions of the outside world for Surry County during the 40's. Sons were called up from the Draughn, Simmons, Hutchens, Gillespie and Atkinson families at Blue's Grove and others in the community were called. The church joined in prayer for the safe return of young men who had been called into combat duty. During that time, the church called a new pastor. Rev Sam Jones served Blue's Grove Baptist Church as pastor from 1943 through 1947.

In 1945, R. Wesley Nichols, Sr. was elected to serve as Clerk of Blue's Grove Baptist Church, a position he would hold for twenty years. Just as with Roy Simmons before him, all church business meetings would begin with the reading of the Clerk's minutes for the previous meeting, the record of all official decisions and discussions which took place among the members. Business meetings of the church might be to approve a budget, consider the formal acceptance of new members, any special mission or community projects, or matters pertaining to the church building and grounds.

There is a gap of a few months during 1945 in the minutes of Blue's Grove Baptist Church just prior to Wes Nichols' election, and a book or loose pages may have been lost in transferring the records from Roy Simmons. We believe that during that period, the election and ordination of three new deacons was completed by the church. The new deacons were Lacy Dollyhigh, Walter Draughn, and Wes Nichols. Later on, in 1947, Rev. Delmar Hodges was called back to serve as pastor of Blue's Grove.

Several members who were youths in the church during the forties remember that there was a good deal of activity that involved the people in special services, Sunday School picnics, and other programs. Pauline Beasley recalls that, sometime in the later 1940's, "We had a special program to collect donations of clothes, food and money for the Thomasville Orphanage, or the Baptist Children's Home. I remember that one day a lot of us piled into the back of a big, open truck and drove from Blue's Grove down to Thomasville. We carried all the donations, and visited with the children there. They gave us a tour of the dorms, and took us through the farm and vegetable gardens that they ran to support the home."

Several of the families at Blue's Grove were fairly large, as was very common during the 40's and 50's with most of the farm families in North Carolina. And so it was that families played a very strong part in the early years of the church. It also seems very logical that, even during the tougher financial times of those early years, Blue's Grove established a tradition of supporting the work of the North Carolina Baptist Children's Home and other mission activities.

Rev. Silas Smith came to Blue's Grove to serve as its pastor in 1949, and he led the church into its second decade. That time was very fruitful for the church. The local economy was recovering from the depression of the 30's and the war of the 40's, and several of the young people in the church were nearing adulthood. The church continued to grow in numbers.

In March of 1950, the members voted to buy pews to replace the first benches that were in the church. One year later, in 1951, the church voted to build new Sunday School rooms to make room for the growing number of members. Two new class rooms were added to the rear of the sanctuary, at a total cost of \$2,700. Deacon Dixie Watson served as the contractor for the project and he coordinated the volunteer work of members who donated their time and efforts.

In September, 1951, Lacy Dollyhigh was elected as Chairman of the Board of Deacons. He played a very strong role in the life of Blue's Grove for many years, also serving as Superintendent of the Sunday School for nearly 32 years.

Robert W. Nichols, Jr. notes that "There were two people who were really important to the church while I was growing up. Lacy Dollyhigh held things together; as Chairman of the Deacons, he would make announcements and lead church business meetings after Sunday School whenever the preacher was serving another church. And he would visit the sick on a regular basis if the preacher couldn't make all the rounds. Lacy kept things moving very smoothly, no matter what happened.

"The other person was Mrs. Bettie Draughn. Everyone who heard her teach a Sunday School lesson knows what a great speaker Mrs. Draughn was. Both Mrs. Draughn and Lacy Dollyhigh stabilized things and helped a great deal to keep Blue's Grove growing."

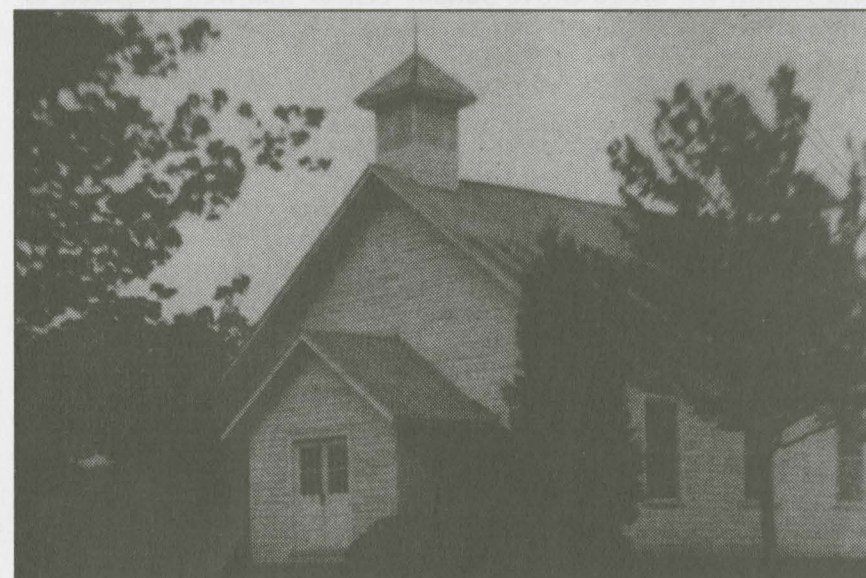
Further modernization of the church came in December of 1952, when a heating system was installed. The new oil-fired system replaced

the large wood-burning stove that had occupied the middle of the church building for years. The system was installed in a basement dug under the new Sunday School rooms at the rear of the building.

During April of 1953, a Speaking Contest on Temperance was sponsored at Blue's Grove for the youth of the church. Those who presented speeches were Barbara Freeman, Susan Nichols, Odell Hutchens, Wilford McCraw, Betty Jean Dollyhigh, Jo Ann Johnson, and Carol Nester. The winner of the contest was Wilford McCraw, who received a Silver Medal.

The first member of the congregation to be interred in the Blue's Grove cemetery was Mr. George Riggs, who was buried behind the church in 1940. As time went on the congregation realized that it needed more land for the burial of members. In 1953 the church approved the purchase from H.S. Blue of 1/4 of an acre south of the church for a burial place. The cost was \$50.

During 1953, Rev. George Reynolds was called as pastor of the church. During the mid-50's, foreign wars once again entered into the minds of members. Ernest Nichols, Grady Nations, S. Blue and others were called into army duty after they had finished school and some saw action in Korea.



Blue's Grove Baptist Church, 1954.

It was on June 26, 1955 that Blue's Grove held its first Homecoming Sunday celebration. This special service and dinner was to become an annual event, a time when those who had moved away to other communities could come home to Blue's Grove and enjoy the strong fellowship of old friends. After the morning Sunday School and preaching services, a large dinner was served in the church yard. Everyone brought plenty of vegetable and meat dishes, and each cook usually prepared her best deserts for Homecoming.

Most members present in the 50's and 60's recall that Deacon Walter Draughn always brought along a large metal cooler of fresh, home made lemonade. The lemonade was usually kept under the shade of a maple tree near the end of the long homecoming tables. Even after bottled softdrinks became very popular in the 60's, Mr. Draughn's lemonade was a favorite. There was usually an afternoon song service in the church, after lunch was finished. Everyone took the time to visit with old friends and family, and came in to enjoy music provided by church members and visiting groups.

And the church continued to grow. In April of 1957, the church voted to construct four new Sunday School class rooms. The four were added to the back of the building. Dixie Watson again served as the contractor, and the addition was completed at the cost of \$2,165. With six completed class rooms, the Blue's Grove Sunday School was well prepared to handle all of the growth and change that would happen over the years.

In December of 1958, a committee made up of Marion Simmons, Lula Badgett, and Anna Branch was appointed by the church to select a new piano for the sanctuary. The original piano was traded in April of 1959, and the new instrument was purchased for \$545. They chose the new piano very carefully, and it was moved to the new sanctuary in 1989, where it is still used in the Sunday services.

Chapter Four The Sunday School: Christian Education

From those very earliest meetings in the grove that grew into Blue's Grove Baptist Church, the Sunday School has been at the heart of everything that the church has done. The founding members had sought to create a church that would help them bring up their children in the Christian faith, and they recognized the importance of a Sunday School to teach a good understanding of the scripture.

Vance Marion was elected the first Superintendent of the Sunday School at Blue's Grove. He was in charge of organizing classes, conducting the opening and closing of the Sunday School sessions, and being certain that teachers had any lesson books or materials that were available.

The Sunday School was originally organized into four classes, each with a teacher:

Bettie Draughn	Adults
Fannie Simmons	Young People
Archie Draughn/Roy Simmons	Junior Class
Nell Badgett	Card Class

During the first decade at Blue's Grove, there were no separate class rooms for the Sunday School. Instead, two heavy wires were strung across the Church, and curtains were pulled during Sunday School sessions to create four temporary rooms. The Adults and Card Class met in the front areas, while the Junior and Young People's classes met in the back of the church.

The Card Class was the youngest, being children up to approximately nine years of age. The name came from the fact that each child received a large card every Sunday morning. On one side, a picture showed a scene from the bible, and there was a short story and bible verse on the other side that was related to the picture. There are a very few copies of those early cards in family albums and bibles today.



Mr. Lacy Dollyhigh & Mrs. Bettie Draughn

Mrs. Bettie Draughn taught the Adult Class at Blue's Grove for many years. In her later years, a senior adult class was formed, and she was active as teacher for a long period. Many in the church remember Mrs. Draughn's lessons as being very thoughtful, well-prepared, and useful in their study and daily lives. On her retirement as active teacher, the senior adult class was taken on by William "Billy" Nations, who continues as teacher today. Several members of the class may have had only two Sunday School teachers since they became adults at Blue's Grove.

Lacy Dollyhigh was elected to the position of Superintendent of the Sunday School sometime early in 1942. He held the position for thirty two years, providing continuing leadership for the educational programs of Blue's Grove. During those years, the Sunday School grew to a point where the church felt the need for formal class rooms, adding to the number of rooms at three different times. At the time of his retirement from the leadership of the Sunday School, Lacy Dollyhigh was recognized by the church for his years of tireless work during a special Sunday service.

Many adults in today's Sunday School at Blue's Grove remember classes and special picnics that helped make Sunday mornings special when they were younger. Some of the boys still remember being called down for talking during the Sunday School lessons, but we won't name anyone here. The Sunday School picnics were frequently held away from the church grounds, sometimes in one of the beautiful parks located nearby in the mountains visible from the front lawn of the church.

Other memories include a time in the 1950's when the Surry Baptist Association sponsored Sunday School conventions each year. On those days, a church would send a delegation from its Sunday School to a special service that included a lesson, singing, and a picnic afterward. On several occasions, Blue's Grove Baptist Church was recognized for sending the largest group, and was given a banner. Those banners hung in class rooms for several years.

Delmer McCraw remembers some of the humorous times of Sunday School during the early fifties. "One Sunday I thought there was going to be a fight. A big horse fly had come in through the window and landed on Ernest Nichols' head. Gray Nichols had reached over and hit the fly. Ernest just about knocked his brother off the bench until he noticed why he had hit him so hard."

"I also remember Lula Badget was our favorite teacher for the Young People's class. She decided one year to take a rest and let someone else teach. We wanted her back and were really mean to the new teacher. We'd have been mean to anyone. Well, we drove her out, and Lula came back. I'm really ashamed now that we did that."

"Lula used to have cook-outs for all of us. One year we had a contest to see who could eat the most hot dogs. I know Robert Nichols won. I think he must have eaten nearly a dozen hot dogs that day," said Delmer.

One long-time teacher in the Sunday School was Sam McCreary. Sam accepted the Young People's class in 1950 and taught the high school-aged group for almost thirty years. His manner was even and soft-spoken, but he commanded a good deal of respect from everyone he taught over the years. Many members still refer to his work to help the young people of the church see how their values could be shaped by their faith and family life.

Lester Dollyhigh and his family held a different distinction. They were almost always the very first to arrive for Sunday School and opened the church. And while some people would try to leave home early to see if they could beat Lester Dollyhigh to church, none would argue that he and Mamie Dollyhigh were always among the strongest supporters of the Sunday School and church.

There have been six Directors of the Sunday School since Lacy Dollyhigh's retirement in 1973. They are:

Ray Simpson	1973-1976
Dennis Bledsoe	1976-1979
Leo Wilson	1979-1980
Ray Simpson	1980-1982
James Nichols	1982-1984
Ray Riggs	1984-1986
Paul King	1987-Present

The members of the church who have served as teachers and assistant teachers for the Sunday School class over the years are too numerous to name here. Some who have taught a class would call it their most meaningful activity with the church.

Today's Sunday School at Blue's Grove Baptist Church is organized into nine classes, ranging from Pre-School Children to Senior Adults. A listing of the classes and their teachers is included in the final pages of this history.

Special Youth Programs

Over the years, special efforts have been made to enrich the church lives of young people, both members and community members from outside Blue's Grove. The form of organization, and the activities have varied over the years, depending upon the number of members who participated in the youth programs.

During Mr. Delmar Hodges' ministry, youth programs often centered around what Rev. Hodges called "The Booster Band." Young people were brought together for singing meetings, and they often sang as a part of the regular church services. And there would sometimes be special refreshments for Booster Band members after services, with ice cream during the summer being a favorite of many.

A Baptist Training Union was formed during the earlier years to provide young people with a social activity that also combined religious training and recreational fun. Training Union meetings usually featured a lesson or presentation on a pertinent topic, along with some singing. There were also chances to play ball games and let off steam, as well as opportunities to just sit around the church or the church yard and talk with people.

Blue's Grove Baptist Church is located near the boundary of three different school districts. The youth meetings at the church have given the young people of the neighborhood a chance to gather outside the school, a special way of keeping the families and friends of the area in touch with each other.

Today, a Youth Group meets at least twice every month for an inspirational and social program. During warmer months, picnics and cook-outs are held along with the programs. And the members have also taken part in raising money for projects. One project was the Youth Group's effort to purchase the altar and pulpit furnishings for the new church building. Bake sales, car washes, and other fundraising projects over a one year period helped the young people make this important contribution to the new church.



Young People's Class, 1950 or 51; Dan Riggs, Teacher

Chapter Five Pastors Of The Church



Rev. Delmar D. Hodges
1939 - 1943, 1947 - 1949, & 1956 - 1961

Rev. Hodges was born on July 23, 1905. He was married to Lela Dickens Hodges who lives in the area. They had three children: Harold, Mary Frances Riggs (deceased), and Phyllis. Rev. Hodges died in an accident on June 24, 1966.

Rev. Hodges was licensed to preach by Oak Grove Baptist Church in the Beulah community. He was ordained to the ministry at Antioch Baptist Church in 1939. He then served as pastor of Blue's Grove, Antioch and Oak Grove at the same time in late 1939. Rev. Hodges served Blue's Grove Baptist Church as pastor during three different times.

At one time, Rev. Hodges served as pastor of five churches at the same time. One of those churches had preaching services on Sunday only when there was a fifth Sunday.

Churches pastored by Rev. Hodges include: Blue's Grove, Oak Grove, Antioch, Holly Springs, Pine Ridge, Central View, Ladonia, Mountain View, New Hope, Mountain Park, Dover, White Plains Baptist, and Woodville Baptist Churches.



Rev. Sam Jones
1943 - 1947

Rev. Jones, born on March 14, 1910, was married to Lula Hill Jones. They had two sons: Samuel Lester Jones and Franklin Delano Jones. Rev. Jones passed away on May 20, 1965

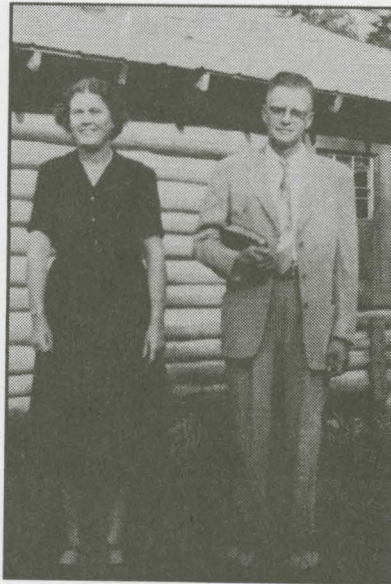
Rev. Jones was ordained at White Plains Baptist Church in 1940. During his ministry, Rev. Jones served as pastor of Blue's Grove, Mayo Mountain, and Fancy Gap Baptist Churches.



Rev. & Mrs. Silas Smith
1949 - 1953

Born June 11, 1900, Rev. Smith was married to Lema Doss Smith. They had two children: Joe Smith and Lois Smith Hodges. Rev. Smith died on October 5, 1969

Rev. Smith was ordained on November 12, 1944 at Piney Grove Baptist Church. The list of churches Rev. Smith served as pastor include: Pauls Creek Baptist, Central View, Blue's Grove, Copeland, Salem Fork, Ladonia, and Oak Grove in Virginia.



Rev. George & Miss Elza Reynolds
1953 - 1956

Rev. Reynolds was born on September 26, 1907 and passed away on December 25, 1956. Although he never married, Rev. Reynolds lived at his parent's homeplace with his sister Miss Elza Reynolds until his death in 1956.

Miss Elza Reynolds always attended church services with Rev. Reynolds, visiting church members homes with him. She was said to be very faithful and supported her brother's ministry with her presence and prayers.

Rev. Reynolds was ordained to the ministry on March 18, 1950 at Rock Hill Baptist Church. The list of churches served by Rev. Reynolds includes: Pine Ridge Baptist, Snow Hill and Flat Ridge in Virginia, Turkey Ford, Pinnacle View, Copeland, Rock Hill, and Blue's Grove (his last church).



Rev. Grover Tilley
1961 - 1963

Rev. Tilley was born on February 17, 1911 and ordained to the ministry on August 12, 1945 at Maple Springs Baptist Church.

A list of the churches he pastored includes: Arbor Grove, West Elkin, Center Baptist, East Elkin, Little Richmond, Mt. Hermon, Union Cross, Blue's Grove, Community Baptist, Shady Branch, and White Plains Baptist (in Wilkes County, North Carolina).

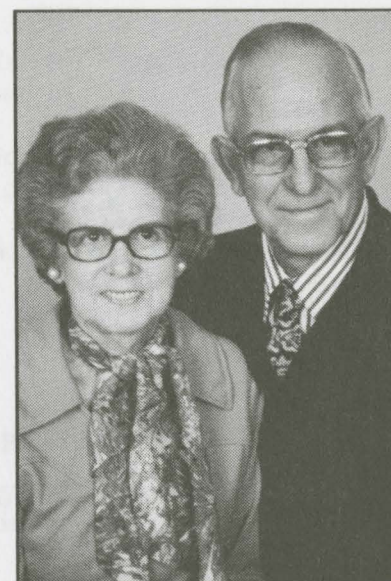


Rev. Orville Bledsoe
1963 - 1974

Born on April 4, 1919, Rev. Bledsoe is married to Ruth Draughn Bledsoe. They have two sons, Rev. Alton Bledsoe and Rev. Dennis Bledsoe, and four grandchildren.

Rev. Bledsoe was ordained to the ministry in July of 1962 at Copeland Baptist Church. He retired in 1987, but continues to work with smaller churches in the area.

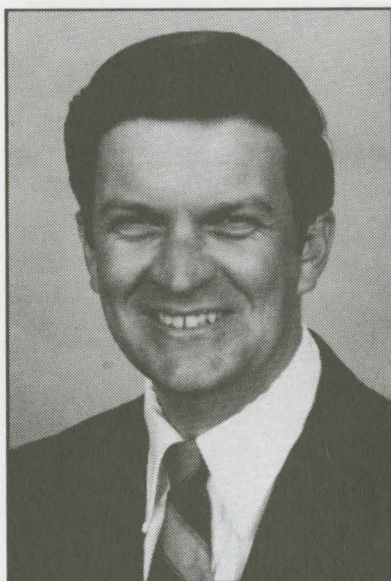
The churches Rev. Bledsoe served include: Oak Grove Baptist in Cana, Virginia; New Hope Baptist Church (two different times), and Blue's Grove Baptist Church.



Rev. Roy & Mrs. Estes
1975- 1981

Rev. Estes born April 2, 1911 and died on September 26, 1986. He was married to Jettie Edwards Estes. They had one son, Rev. Robert Estes, and four grandchildren. Mrs. Estes resides in Wilmington, Delaware.

Rev. Estes was ordained on March 31, 1968 at Calvary Baptist Church. The churches served by Rev. Estes include: Rock Hill, Blue's Grove, South York in Hampton, Virginia; and Reed Island Springs in Meadows of Dan, Virginia. He also served as interim pastor at Ivy Farms New Market Baptist Church in Hampton, Virginia.



Rev. Tony Holder
1981 - Present

Rev. Holder was born on June 8, 1943, and is married to Shelby Robinson Holder. They have three children: Shannon, Tamara, and Miranda.

Rev. Holder was ordained as a minister on August 23, 1981 at Ivy Green Baptist Church in Surry County. He was interim pastor at Imogene Baptist Church before accepting the call by Blue's Grove in March of 1981.

Other Ministers

Rev. Robert Nations served as the Assistant Pastor of Blue's Grove Baptist Church from August 20, 1967 through 1974.

Rev. Ernest Nichols served as Interim Pastor from November 3, 1974 through February of 1975.

Rev. Ricky Atkins was appointed Assistant Pastor of Blue's Grove in March of 1989.

Ministers Called From Blue's Grove Baptist Church

The following men who were called to preach were members of Blue's Grove Baptist Church.

J. V. Lowe	1965
Robert Nations	1965
Ernest Nichols	1972
Alton Bledsoe	1978
Dennis Bledsoe	1979
James Marion	1980
Ricky Atkins	1987

Chapter Six Women's Missions

The women of Blue's Grove Baptist Church have always played a central role in the life of the congregation. In fact, Mrs. Lela Hodges remarked that "I was always struck by the way in which the women at Blue's Grove were very active in every part of the church. Some of the real leaders in the church were the wives and mothers."

That early commitment by women to the faith and to the church made Blue's Grove a strong church. Their prayers, service as teachers in the Sunday School and youth programs, and their examples to both family and community all helped to strengthen the institution of the church.

It was not until the 1960's that the women of Blue's Grove joined to create a continuing organization that would give them a formal means of taking on more work for the church and the community. In 1962, the first meeting of the Blue's Grove Women's Missionary Union (WMU) elected Mrs. Lorena Whittaker Timmons as its first President. The organization included 14 members, all women from the membership of Blue's Grove. At the same time, the WMU sponsored organization of a Young Women's Association (YWA), for teen-aged girls in the church, and The Sun Beams, a group for younger girls.

The WMU has met each month for the past 27 years. Meetings were originally held in the homes of members. Whether in a living room, family room, or around the kitchen table, meetings always consisted of a lesson and prayer. Today meetings are held in the church. The WMU lessons may be about specific mission programs conducted by the Baptists for those in other countries, or may be about how people are working to overcome problems through the church in our own nation. After the program, members share fellowship and enjoy refreshments.

As noted earlier, Blue's Grove had supported the mission activities of the Southern Baptist Convention from the very first days. Those early offerings and gifts to missions, the Baptist Childrens home and the North Carolina Baptist Hospital showed that the people of the church were concerned for the spiritual and physical well-being of people outside their immediate community.



Mrs. Cora Blue, active member of the WMU

The Women's Missionary Union gave the women of Blue's Grove a way to continue their interest in helping others. The WMU has always helped support foreign missions through offerings. At least one special offering each year is collected to send to the foreign mission board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The WMU has also helped organize educational programs for themselves and the entire church, bringing missionaries and volunteers who have traveled and worked in remote areas of the world to the church on Red Brush Road. These programs have helped everyone understand the important work in medicine, education and religious training that is going on in other lands.

The WMU is also very active in local work. From the beginning, members have coordinated a project each year to bring fruit baskets to elders in the church and around the community during the Christmas season. When weather permitted, the WMU's baskets have been delivered by members of the group and the church choir to people who might not have received many gifts or visitors.

One WMU project is a program of regular visits to elderly residents of the area rest homes and hospitals. Members visit in small groups, often talking with individual residents. Sometimes there is an

opportunity to gather some residents for a short program of songs and prayer. Members often assemble small gifts or flowers that might help brighten the day of people confined to a rest home due to failing health.

Other projects have included coordinating efforts to help out in the community when tragedy strikes. WMU members have gathered clothing and food, as well as monetary offerings, to help out families who have lost their homes in fires. Similar help has been extended to families and individuals who have suffered from accidents or other unusual circumstances. Quiet help to those in need has been the Blue's Grove WMU's way of letting people know that others in the community care.

The WMU projects are partially supported by member offerings. Other money comes from a special fund raising project the women organize each year—the annual Harvest Sale. The first such sale was organized in November of 1966 and has become a popular event for everyone. Gray Nichols has served as auctioneer at each of the 22 sales held by the WMU.

Each Harvest Sale is an auction of donated goods, with the proceeds going to the WMU to support their mission programs. The sale will include all types of handicrafts, with beautiful hand made quilts, aprons, kitchen accessories and other items donated by their creators each year. Each year there are numerous food items that prove to be very popular. Cakes, pies, cookies, canned goods, dried fruit, gourds and pumpkins have always been purchased at high prices.

The first Harvest Sale was held in the basement hall of the church on a Saturday afternoon, and a total of \$370.15 was taken in from the day. Of this amount, the WMU donated \$100 toward building rest rooms in the church.

On the following Sunday morning, the WMU presented auctioneer Gray Nichols with a check of \$20 for his work on the sale. He then donated the money to begin a new organ fund for the church, making his gift in honor of Mrs. Lula Badgett. The WMU also gave \$100 to the new fund.

There was another spin-off from the sale that benefitted the organ fund. At the sale, Rev. Orville Beldsoe had been the high bidder on a large pumpkin grown by Mr. Lacy Dollyhigh. Rev. Bledsoe saved seeds from the pumpkin, and sold packets of seeds to a large number of people planning their gardens that February. Those pumpkin seeds earned \$280, which was donated to the organ fund.

Younger Women

The original Young Women's Association (YWA) is now known as Acteens, but the activities and interests of young women at Blue's Grove Baptist Church remained similar for several years. Like the WMU, the young women usually met in members homes and conduct educational programs, prayer meetings, and fellowship. And like the WMU, the younger women learned about and supported missions in other lands. They also supported activities within their own community, reaching out to those less fortunate.

In the 1960's the members of the YWA carried on a large number of projects to help out in the community and in the church. Their fund raising efforts included donut sales, bake sales, and car washes. Sometimes their money was donated to specific projects in the church, such as donating the pictures which hang in the pulpit area of the original sanctuary. The YWA was also instrumental in starting efforts to build a church picnic shelter for Homecomings and special events. They also donated the altar and pulpit furniture which served in the original church for nearly three decades.

YWA members also came out in full force at Christmas time to help make the celebrations more meaningful. During several years, senior members of the group took on the responsibility of organizing and directing the annual Christmas program. During the late sixties, there was a large number of young people in the church, and the YWA members involved a great many in the plays and programs they directed. On a lighter note, the group constructed a float for the Mt. Airy Christmas parade and represented the church in that event on one occasion.

The name was changed to Acteens during the 70's, but the focus on education and service remained constant. At times during the 80's, there were fewer young women in the church, and the Acteens organization disbanded. Today young women and men meet together in the church's youth group and projects involve them in learning about missions, in working to help the church and community.

In all, the women's organizations at Blue's Grove have fulfilled the church's goal of bringing the message of Christ to people everywhere. Their emphasis on mission work has helped people all over, with offerings for international projects and local relief efforts. The WMU and Acteens have also helped to make the church a stronger community of Christians, and a nicer place in which to worship. And their work with senior citizens has brought joy and peace to those who deserve it most.

Chapter Seven 1960-79 Two Decades of Change

Building on the first twenty years of work and worship, Blue's Grove Baptist Church entered the 1960's as a strong church, ready to continue growing, and ready to continue serving the spiritual needs of the community. This was to be a period of transition for the church, just as the decade of the 60's brought change to the entire nation. Yet, with Blue's Grove, the changes of that decade were gradual and always positive, and many changes were improvements to the physical condition of the sanctuary and grounds.

Rev. D. D. Hodges completed his final term as pastor in 1961, going on to serve as pastor of other area churches until his death a few years later. He was followed by Rev. Grover Tilley, who served as pastor from 1961 through 1963. In 1963, Rev. Orville Bledsoe answered the church's call to serve as pastor. He would remain with the congregation at Blue's Grove for many years and develop close ties there, along with his wife, Ruth. In fact, many cooks in the church still use their copy of Ruth Bledsoe's recipe for pecan pies. Rev. Bledsoe has been an active wood-working craftsman, and many members have pieces he fashioned from wood over the years.

During the next two decades, gradual changes were to take place at Blue's Grove that were caused by shifts in the larger world. The Surry County economy was changing, and there was less emphasis placed on farming as textiles and other businesses began to attract young adults. And while many in the area left the farm and the farm lifestyle for other interests, a great many tried to preserve that life and their livelihoods. While Blue's Grove has always included many farm families among its membership, today's roster of members includes many who grew up on farms but have worked in other businesses for many years.

Another general change would be in the size of families. During the 1940's, farm families in the Red Brush community were fairly large, with three to five children being the average. But in the late 1950's, smaller families of two to three children became the norm. While membership and church attendance have not declined to any extent over the years, it is easy for the senior members to see that there are not as many children and young adults as could be seen each Sunday during the earlier days at Blue's Grove.

One interesting note is that a great number of those children from large families begun in the 40's and early 50's went on to be teachers during the sixties and seventies. Some have had to move to other areas to find jobs, but the number of educators and other professionals is very high for such a small community. Perhaps the strong tradition of Christian education and family values present at Blue's Grove helped to send so many toward careers of service.

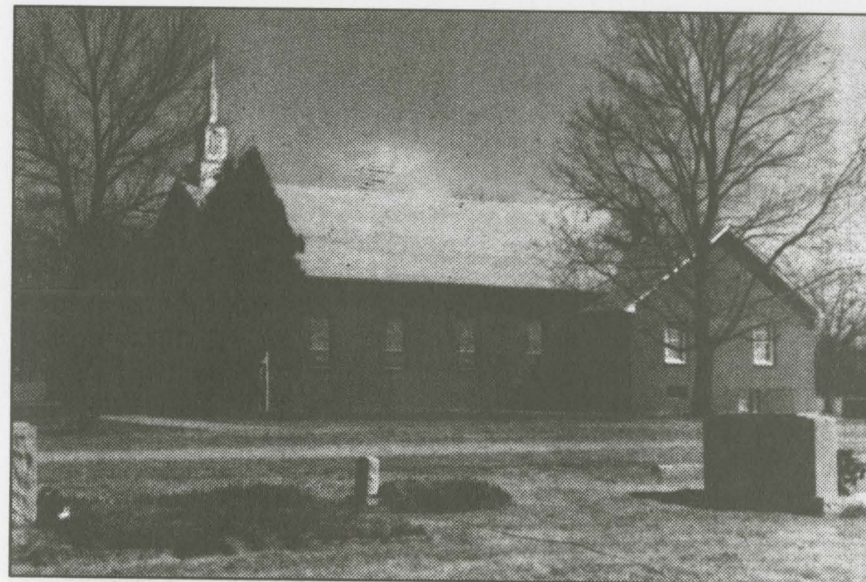
But the changes in the community have also had some positive results. In general, the families in the area have been successful in keeping farms within the family. With the coming of other industries to the area, the economic picture has improved to some extent and the people at Blue's Grove have benefitted. This has also meant that they could support expanded activities to serve the less fortunate around the area, as well as make additions and improvements to the church.

Regardless of the changes, Blue's Grove was still a country church. One Sunday during the early sixties, everyone arrived for an early summer service. Rev. Oren Bradley, who lead the Surry Baptist Association, was to visit with Blue's Grove and speak during the eleven o'clock service. But the first people who went into the church raced back out and closed the door.

A family of skunks had gotten under the church building, so the service was moved outdoors that bright, sunny day. A brave member ran inside and gathered a few hymnals for singing, and the service began under the trees. Rev. Bradley taught the Sunday School lesson that day to the entire congregation in an outdoor service that reminded some of the days when the church gathered for preaching services in the grove above the church. Mr. H. S. Blue trapped the skunks early the following week and aired the building so that services could resume indoors the next Sunday.

In 1964, four new Deacons were elected and ordained by the church. Archie Draughn, Ernest Nichols, Ellis "Buddy" Haymore, and Eugene Johnson were ordained to the Deacon Board on January 12, 1964.

In 1965, a burst of activity brought about several changes in the appearance of the church building at Blue's Grove. To oversee the finances and arrangements for the work, the church elected three new trustees on November 9, 1965. They were Wes Nichols, Archie Draughn and Eugene Johnson.



Blue's Grove after remodeling, during the late 1960's

The church voted to have the exterior of the building covered in brick, as the older clapboards were showing some weather damage. They also looked into replacing the original windows, as some were getting fairly loose in the frames and making noise when the winds blew. Instead of using new clear glass windows, stained glass windows were to be installed. Families and individuals purchased windows, with memorial or honorary inscriptions, and these still grace the main Fellowship Hall that was the original sanctuary. A new roof was also installed at the same time. The improvements were paid for with special donations and collections, and the old siding and windows were sold later on to complete the payments.

Also in 1965, after much energetic work by the young women of the YWA, new pulpit furniture was purchased. The cost of the sturdy walnut furniture was \$325, and a large part of the cost was paid by the YWA from their many fundraising efforts that year.

Another high point of 1965 was that two men of the church accepted the calling to be preachers of the gospel. J. V. Lowe and Robert Nations were called to preach and the church was proud to see these two men become active as ministers. Rev. Lowe was ordained to the ministry after a short time and has since served as pastor of a number of churches in the

area. Rev. Nations, who was retired, accepted the position as Assistant Pastor at Blue's Grove and served until 1977. Rev. Nations held services whenever the pastor was away, and assisted with visitation and other church duties.

At another point in the later sixties, the church voted that the basement under the Sunday School class rooms should be completed, and a large room was created to serve as the fellowship hall for special gatherings. The room also held the Adult Sunday School class, and was later equipped with sliding dividers to accommodate another class. In 1969, a well was dug and the installation of rest rooms was completed in the basement.

In 1970, the church purchased an electronic organ to be used along with the piano in accompanying the congregation and choir. Mrs. Frankie Nichols, who served as pianist, took the position of organist and younger members of the church served as pianists. Several had studied piano with Frankie Nichols, and the pianists included Gail Johnson, Beverly Badgett, Mark Johnson, Kristi Nichols and Susanne Nichols. As noted elsewhere, the donations to the organ fund were made in honor of several of the senior members of the church.

Also in 1970, a picnic shelter was erected on the rear of the church yard. The permanent shelter provided a dependable spot to hold the Homecoming dinner in all weather, and was convenient for youth meetings and Sunday school class picnics during warm months. The project was started at the urging of the YWA organization, who helped in the fundraising to cover costs.

In 1972, Deacon Ernest Nichols accepted the calling to the ministry. He had served as a Sunday School teacher and Deacon for some time.

After much discussion, a vote of the church was taken in 1973 to begin a fund for construction of a new, larger sanctuary building. Some were concerned the size of the original building was too small, while others worried that the structure would begin to deteriorate and that a new building might be required soon. But the smaller families in the church, meant that the earlier rapid growth did not continue. While the urgency of building a new church would fall away during the late 70's and early 80's, Blue's Grove continued to accumulate a building fund that would eventually pay for a new sanctuary.

In August of 1975, a vote was taken to establish a Church Library. Books were donated by several members, and a budget was set aside for purchasing new books. The Church Library contains volumes relating to the interpretation of scripture, Baptist Church doctrine and beliefs, general Christian inspiration, church music, and a collection of books especially for the children of the church. Joanne Bryant served as the first Librarian, and shelves and cabinets were built for the new Library by members.

Also in August of 1975, the church added three Deacons to the Board after Ernest Nichols had resigned as a Deacon to become pastor of Gum Orchard Baptist Church that spring. Alton Bledsoe and Brady Johnson were ordained on August 3rd. Ray Riggs was elected as an active Deacon at that time, since he had served as a Deacon of Central View Baptist Church before uniting with Blue's Grove Baptist Church in 1971.

Perhaps it was the heat from the summer of 1976 that did it, but the church voted in August of that year to install a central air conditioning system to cool the sanctuary and Sunday School class rooms.

Two more men were to accept the calling of the ministry in 1978 and 1979. Alton and Dennis Bledsoe, sons of Ruth and Rev. Orville Bledsoe, had attended Blue's Grove with their parents during Mr. Bledsoe's ministry. Both had been active members of the Sunday School and the church. Both were ordained and have served as pastor of area churches since accepting the call.

After Alton Bledsoe's ordination to the ministry and his calling to become pastor at Cross Roads Baptist Church, he resigned from the Board of Deacons at Blue's Grove in 1978. In January of 1979, the church ordained Gray Nichols and Delmer McCraw as Deacons. Wes Nichols retired as an active member of the Board of Deacons at that time.

Chapter Eight Preparing For The Future

The 1980's were a time of fine-tuning for the members of Blue's Grove Baptist Church. Rev. Roy Estes served as pastor from 1975 to 1981, and the decade began with the church in strong shape. Mrs Jettie Estes writes "Oh how I remember the days at that little church with its lovely view of God's creation all around. . . . Did I ever enjoy those Sunday School teachers. I can almost hear and see Billy Nations before those eager faces listening intensely; and Leo, Jean, Connie and Gray—I had the privilege of being in their classes a few times. Frankie's music and the Bryant's singing contributed to the spirit of the worship services, and Roy was so appreciative of them.

"Becoming a senior citizen hasn't taken away my desire to teach children. I can remember each one in my children's class at Blue's Grove. I pray for them. Some, I know, have made commitments to obey God's word. I pray all of them have," she wrote.

In 1981, Rev. Tony Holder was called to be pastor. Rev. Holder said "My first impression of Blue's Grove was that it was not a spiritual church. I even prayed that I wouldn't let this change me. But I found out that the people of the church are very spiritual in their way. They aren't vocal, but it is in their heart. That is as it should be."

During the 1980's the church would welcome some new families in the community who found a spiritual and friendly home at Blue's Grove. Also, in 1980, James Marion accepted the call of the gospel ministry after several years membership at Blue's Grove.

Where the two decades before had been times of changes to the church building, the early 1980's were times of spiritual reflection. There were gradual additions to the membership. There was also a great deal of activity at times to visit the elderly and others in the community.

In 1983, the church members met to adopt a new constitution and by-laws, a more formalized means of governing the church. And in 1984 the church would vote to authorize paving of the church parking lots.

In late 1987, Ricky Atkins would accept the call to the ministry. He was ordained in March of 1989 and has since been appointed by the church as its Assistant Pastor, working with Rev. Holder to strengthen the work of the church.

But the most momentous decision would come later in the 1980's when the church would decide that the time had come to construct a new building. The building fund had grown through continuing donations and careful investments, and could now be put toward the majority of the cost for a new sanctuary.

A Building Committee was elected by a meeting of the members. Buddy Haymore, Betty Nichols, Eugene Johnson, Leo Wilson, Edith Owen, Paul King, Dorothy "Dot" Riggs and Betty Branch were selected to oversee the development of plans, hire builders and craftsmen, and to select furnishings for the new building. The committee presented its findings to the church and final decisions were made to begin construction of the building in 1988.

With renewed emphasis on building the new church, fundraising work was increased, and members began to share a sense of excitement about everything connected with the project.

Ground breaking ceremonies were held on Sunday, July 30th, 1988. After the regular service that morning, members gathered under the maple trees that grew in a border north of the original church. Prayers and responsive readings by the congregation were followed by the ceremonial turning of the earth by church officials. Charter Members Frank and Archie Draughn, Gray Nichols, Chairman of the Board of Deacons; Buddy Haymore, Chairman of the Building Committee; Edith Owen, Director of the WMU; Paul King, Director of the Sunday School; and Jyl Nichols, Youth Director were among those to turn the shovel.

During the service, a flock of white geese from the Glenn Branch barnyard in back of the original grove wandered across the field to join in the ground breaking ceremony. After the service ended, Rev. Tony Holder admitted to some that he almost broke into laughter when it seemed like the geese wanted to join in the festivities.

The new church rose rapidly in the area just north of the older building. Several church members kept a running record of the progress with their cameras. And as the building began to quickly take shape,

other activities began to take on new energy for the church. The 1988 Harvest Sale would bring \$1,329.86 to the WMU, a record amount which would go to support the group's many projects.

The Christmas Service at Blue's Grove, on Christmas Day, would be the last conducted in the old sanctuary. That service was tape recorded, as many remembered the relatives and friends who had passed on, the times they had spent there with children or parents. Several people spoke of the fond memories, while others sang traditional songs. Rev. Holder closed the emotional service with a short message and then everyone enjoyed a few minutes to wish their fellow members a Merry Christmas before rushing off to family gatherings.

The following Sunday, January 1st, 1989 the first service was held in the new building. Rev. Orville Bledsoe was asked to deliver the sermon, since the decision to begin looking toward a new building had been made under his stewardship. Rev. Bill Pierce, Director of Missions for the Surry Baptist Association also spoke that Sunday.

That January also saw two other milestones. Becky Draughn was the first person to make a profession of faith in Christ and to join the church in the new building. Richard Marion, who had joined the church in the final months of 1988, was the first to be baptised in the new church's baptistry.

In the spring, on Saturday, April 22nd, the WMU sponsored a large bake sale. All of the ladies in the church helped with the baked goods and \$366 was collected to support a new project. The WMU donated the proceeds of the sale to purchase a tape recorder for the sanctuary that would be used to tape each service. A new tape ministry was begun to bring those who were home-bound due to health conditions a bit closer to the regular services of the church. Copies of the tapes are made each week and taken to elder members and others in the community who cannot attend services on a regular basis.

The following Sunday, April 23rd, the church observed Family Sunday. To emphasize the importance of families, the largest family group present was recognized. Preston and Opal Carpenter had 17 family members in attendance, including their children, grand children, and great-grand children.

One week later, April 30th, Youth Sunday shifted the spot light to the young people of the church. Each person from ages four to nineteen

took part in the service. They replaced the regular adult choir that Sunday, and then each made an individual presentation. The service featured vocal solos, piano songs, readings of Bible verses, poems and inspirational messages. The service was closed with a brief message by Rev. Ricky Atkins.

On May 7th, the church observed its annual Pastor Appreciation Sunday. Rev. Tony Holder was honored with a special dinner after the morning worship service, and with a special gift from the members of Blue's Grove.

One May 14th, Mother's Day, was observed by the youth of the church, who presented gifts to each mother. Special honors were given to the oldest and youngest mothers present that day. Mrs. Mary Johnson and Mrs. Donna Draughn each received a plant from the youth.

This burst of activity surrounding the new church building signifies a renewed church congregation. As Blue's Grove Baptist Church celebrates its 50 Anniversary in the spring of 1989, the church is clearly prepared to continue growing and working into the next century. Seeing this record of 50 years of solid work, growth and commitment, we are reminded of a favorite old hymn which was sung often by the people at Blue's Grove:

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can He Say, than to you He hath said,
You, who unto Jesus, for refuge have fled.*

-George Keith

Members of Blue's Grove Baptist Church As of May, 1989

Archie Draughn	Magdalene Haymore
Frank Draughn	Peggy Atkins
Sadie Draughn Martin	JoAnn Johnson Bryant
Janette Dollyhigh	Connie Draughn
Thelma Eads Smith	Grady Mitchell
Lorene Eads Kidd	Donald Badgett
Pearl Eads Mosley	Delmer McCraw
Anna Branch	Billy Nations
Cora Haymore	Betty Hutchens
Robert Ellis Bales	Opal Carpenter
Alice Mitchell	Caral Nester Pruitt
Lizzie McCraw	Faye Wright Sawyers
Stella Branch Coble	Edna Branch
Nannie Branch	Gail Ray Branch Patton
Pauline Dollyhigh Beasley	Betty Sue Draughn Allred
Wesley Nichols	Roger Haymore
Martha Nichols	Brenda Whitaker McKinney
Allene McHone Johnson	Eugene Johnson
Mildren Badgett Johnson	Ann McCraw
Mamie Dollyhigh	Onita Riggs
Mildred Collins	Paul Riggs
Curtis Atkins	Randall Bryant
Margie Dollyhigh Whitaker	Frankie Ann Nichols
Jesse Atkinson	Susan Branch Hodges
Annie Atkinson	Jean Badgett
Ella Badgett	Ronnie Atkins
Hassell Dollyhigh	Brenda Carpenter
Seldon Badgett	Jimmy Draughn
Bessie Draughn	Michael Johnson
Nannie Riggs	Wade Nichols
Marie Riggs Wren	Gray Nichols
Lula Haymore	Brady Johnson
Ellis Haymore	Mary Johnson
Polly McCreary Nations	Patty Johnson Stafford
Iva Jean Lewis Cave	Edith Vernon
Wilford McCraw	Monty Gray Vernon
Billy Whitaker	Roy Richard Mitchell
Jay Whitaker	Conrad Draughn
Wayne Whitaker	Mike Hutchens
Mary Frances Branch Joyce	Randy Mitchell
Mary Lou Joyce Atkinson	Pamela Bryant
Irene Marsh Hawks	Richard Hutchens
Celia McCreary	Marsha Draughn Madlin
Lettie Jean Edwards	Ray Simpson

JoAnn Simpson
 Kim Bodenhamer Cruise
 Andy Haynes
 Lonnie Badgett
 Judy Houston Snow
 Louise Houston
 D.C. Houston
 Ray Riggs
 Edith M. Owen
 Paul Owen
 Jeff Draughn
 Grady Johnson
 Elizabeth Johnson
 Kim Atkins Brant
 Gaye Simpson Holyfield
 Mearl Branch
 Rosie Branch
 Lynn Houston
 Jan Whitaker Davis
 Tim Whitaker
 Sherrie Houston Holder
 Sammy Simpson
 Dale Marion
 Bobby Bodenhamer
 Neal Branch
 Betty Branch
 Gary Branch
 Michael McCraw
 Danny McCraw
 Jeff Johnson
 Becky McCraw Johnson
 Judy McCraw
 Betty Jean Bullen
 Mark Johnson
 Harry Holyfield
 Judy Haymore
 Glenda Branch Shelton
 Mike Shelton
 Doug Badgett
 Mark Westmoreland
 Janie McCraw Goad
 Mac McCachren
 Debbie Freeman
 Frances Freeman
 Rebecca Minor
 Tony Bullin
 Karen Parries Surratt

Leo Wilson
 Betty Wilson
 Pepper Owen
 Michele Vernon
 Jyl Nichols
 James Nichols
 Betty Nichols
 Robert Nichols
 Lucile Ramsey Poindexter
 Davey Ramsey
 Julie Marion
 Dorothy Parsons Riggs
 R. F. McMurtry
 Edith McMurtry
 Jan McKinney
 Rev. Tony Holder
 Paul King
 Mary King
 Michael Horton
 Shelby Holder
 Tamara Holder
 Richard Brindle
 Jessica King
 Reuben Riggs
 Betty Sue Riggs
 Ricky Atkins
 Debbie Atkins
 Carolyn Bodenhamer
 Krystal Bullin
 Miranda Holder
 Melissa Shumate
 Denny Shumate
 Gaynell Dollyhigh Shumate
 Dean Eads
 Richard Marion
 Lucille Marion
 Justin Nichols
 (James) Wesley Nichols
 Jean Simpson Spencer
 Margaret Draughn
 Becky Draughn
 Michael Parsons
 Susan Parsons
 George Wilson
 Chad Hodges
 Lori Mullins

Blue's Grove Baptist Church 1988-1989

Officers

Pastor	Rev. Tony Holder
Assistant Pastor	Rev. Ricky Atkins

Board of Deacons

Delmer McCraw, Chairman
 Ellis Haymore
 Archie Draughn
 Eugene Johnson
 Gray Nichols
 Ray Riggs
 Brady Johnson

Trustees

Eugene Johnson
 Archie Draughn
 Patty Stafford
 Paul Riggs
 Donald Badgett

Clerk	Dorothy P. Riggs
Treasurer	Leo Wilson
Moderator	Randall Bryant
Vice Moderator	Gray Nichols
Librarian	Betty Wilson
Assistant Librarian	Pepper Owen
Surry Association	
Executive Committee Member	Frank Draughn
Choir Director	Donald Badgett
Assistant Choir Director	Randall Bryant
Organist	Kristi Nichols
Pianist	Susanne Nichols
VBS Director	Joann Bryant
VBS Assistant Director	Frankie Nichols
WMU Director	Edith Owen
Youth Director	Jyl Nichols
Caretaker	Mearl Branch

Sunday School Officers

Director of the Sunday School	Paul King
Pianist	Kristi Nichols
Secretary	Mary King
Treasurer	Mamie Dollyhigh

Teachers

Pre-School	Debbie Atkins - Jan Davis
Grades 1, 2, & 3	Jean Bullin
Grades 4, 5, & 6	Jean Spencer
Grades 7 - 12	Patty Stafford - Jean Badgett
Young Single Adults	Susan Hodges
Young Married Adults	Ricky Atkins - James Nichols
Adult I	Leo Wilson
Adult II	Gray Nichols - Dorothy Riggs
Senior Adults	Billy Nations

Youth Director	Jyl Nichols
Youth Teachers	Susan Hodges
	Mary King
	Shelby Holder
	Debbie Atkins

Social Committee	Dale Marion
	Bobby Bodenhamer

6.50