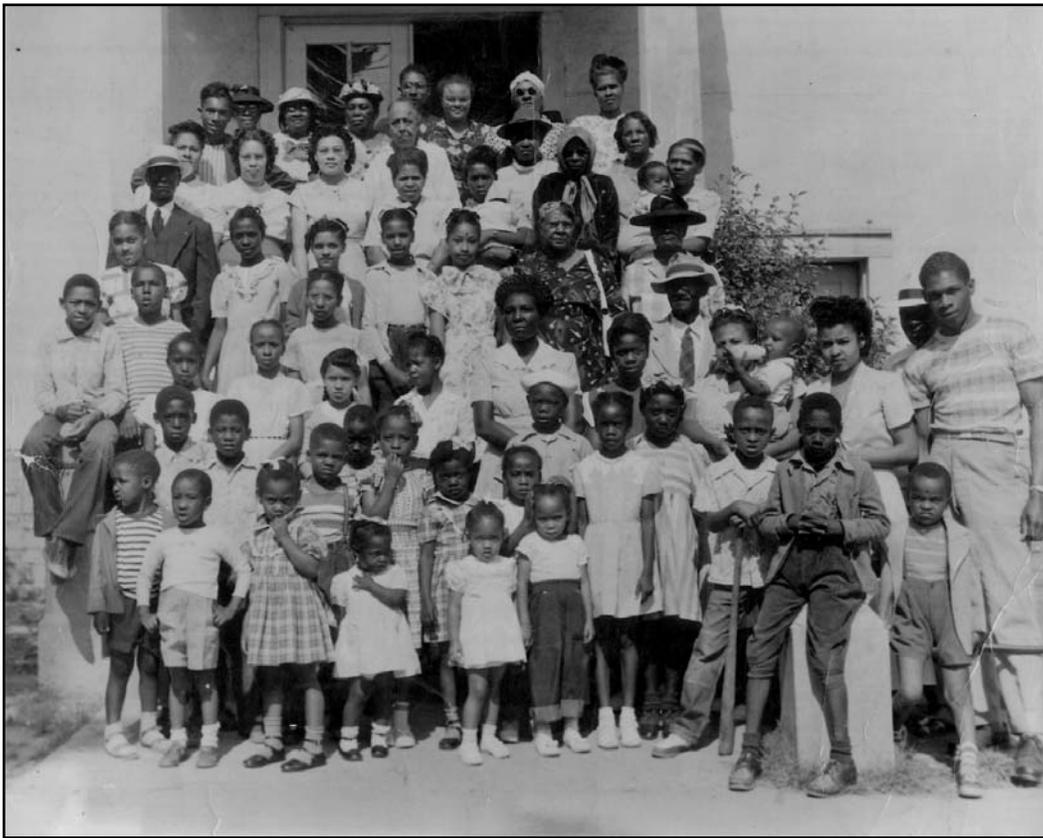


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# How to Research and Write the History of Your Church

A Concise Guide for Regional Conference Churches

By R. Steven Norman, III



**CESS Books International**  
P. O. Box 70249, Nashville, TN 37207

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How to Research and Write the History of Your Church  
*A Concise Guide for Regional Conference Churches*

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## DEDICATION

To my college history teacher,  
Dr. Carl D. Anderson,  
who first ignited my love for history.



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## **Seven Reasons it is Important to Record Your Church History**

1. It is the record of God's saving ministry in your congregation and city.
2. It preserves the story for your children.
3. It serves as a witness.
4. It preserves a record your ministry in your community.
5. To avoid making the mistakes of the past.
6. For encouragement as you face the future.
7. It is needed for major events like church anniversaries, mortgage burnings, and homecomings.

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# How to Research and Write the History of Your Church

**Y**our local church has just asked you to write the history of your church for the homecoming because they feel that you know more about the church than anyone else, or because you are the writer in the congregation. Sarah, the church secretary, has given you a stack of records that include church bulletins, old minutes, some photos and newspaper clippings. You look through the pile and ask, “Where do I start? What do I do all of with this stuff?”

This brief guide will walk you through the process of researching and writing a brief history of your local church.

## **Getting Started**

Preparing the history of your church will require the skills and knowledge of a number of people in your congregation – typist, photographer, graphic designer, writer, individuals with an interest in history, the pastor and church clerk. These persons should be organized into a committee to assist in planning and preparing the history.

Some of the tasks of this committee are to plan how the history will be published, determine a budget to cover the expenses of the project (mileage, photo copies, photography, etc.), develop a timeline for the project, and monitor the progress of the project.

## **Gather Information**

The first step in the research is to gather as much information about your church as possible. Records that you will want to obtain may be divided into several categories: internal records, denominational records and public records.

## How to Research and Write the History of Your Church

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Internal records include clerk's reports, board meeting minutes, correspondence, photos, church bulletins, funeral and wedding programs, church newsletters, council minutes, blueprints, video and audio recordings, etc. Denominational records would include: articles in the *Adventist Review* and *Union paper*, constituency reports, obituaries, other items that may be in your church files at the conference office.

Public records include: property deeds, building permits, city directory listings, newspaper articles, news clips, plat plans, census records, etc. These and much more are available from your local courthouse, library, city or state archives and news offices.

*Oral History Interviews* – You will need to do oral history interviews with knowledgeable members. They will have stories to tell, can help interpret some of your findings, and give personal insights that can add context and warmth to your written history. These interviews will also provide leads to other persons that can help you. These interviews should include not only old members, but church leaders such as choir directors, youth leaders, pastors and others who can provide historical information about various organizations in the church.

Before the interview, prepare a written list of questions that you want to ask the person. Discuss these questions with them ahead of time so that they can be prepared. Also make a checklist of items that you need to carry: a video or tape recorder with fresh batteries or power cord, cassette tapes, camera, two writing pens, a notepad and your list of questions.

When you arrive, choose a quiet location, set up your equipment and start the interview. Ask questions at a comfortable pace and allow time for breaks. Limit your total interview to two hours. If you need more time schedule it for another time.

After you complete the interview do not leave the house listen to the tape to be sure that the recording worked. Once you are home check all dates, places and the spelling of names to be certain that they are correct.

*"I Remember When . . . Day"* – Another way to gather information from members is to sponsor an "I Remember When . . . Day" when the members are asked to bring scrapbooks, photos and other items related to the church's history to church to be placed on display. It is also good to create an inventory of the items brought so that you know who has what even though they must be returned to the owners. Some members may even donate or loan their items to the church archives.

In addition to the display, you will want to have some of the older members share their memories. These memories should be recorded with video cameras and audio recording devices for preservation and use with your history.

## Eleven Important Sources for Church History Information

1. **Church Members** . . . . .Photos, stories, records, audio and video recordings, etc
2. **Court House** . . . . .Copy of deed, plot plan, former owners of property, etc.
3. **Local Newspaper** . . . . .Articles about the church and members
4. **Church Clerk** . . . . .Clerk's Record books, clerk's reports, members, pastors, officers, baptisms
5. **Union Paper** . . . . .Articles, photos and obituaries
6. **School Board** . . . . .School board minutes
7. **Former Pastors** . . . . .Handbills, notes, photos, memories
8. **Local Library & Archives** . . .City and county histories, newspaper articles, city directories
9. **Church Secretary** . . . . .Church bulletins, funeral programs, wedding programs, etc.
10. **Local Conference** . . . . .Clerks reports, constituency reports, tithes and missions statement, Conference directories
11. **General Conference** . . . . .Annual Statistical Reports, SDA Yearbooks

*Site Visits* – Often a congregation has worshiped in several locations. You will want to visit each of these sites. Carry a camera with you to photograph the buildings and even lots where your congregation once worshipped. Note the construction of the buildings. Was it brick or wood? Was it a church or storefront? Was it located in the city or the country? Much can be learned about your congregation as you follow its pilgrimage to its present location.

### **Survey Your Records**

Survey your records so that you can have a good intellectual control of your records. The survey will also reveal gaps in information, raise questions that need to be answered and provide leads to other areas that need to be researched.

Organization is of utmost importance as you gather the records. Keep your records in a portable filing system. Also keep a journal where you can write notes as well as plan and track the progress of your research.

### **Create Your Outline**

The first outline that you will want to make is a timeline. Your timeline will give you a grasp of the chronology of your church and serve as the skeleton for your written history. It may be based on the succession of pastors that have served your congregation but should include as many other major events in the history of your church as practical. Your timeline should focus on your church but include also important denominational, local and world events that may have impacted the congregation such as wars, natural disasters, social movements such as woman's suffrage, the civil rights movement, etc. These will provide an understanding of the historical and social context in which your congregation lived.

### **Writing Your History**

Now you are ready to write the narrative history of your church. Start by trying to find a theme that conveys the story of your church. Some common themes include "We've Come this Far by Faith," and "Reviewing the Past While Moving toward the Future." However deep into the stories you have heard for a theme.

When I was interviewing, Mrs. Frazier, a charter member of the Pell City Church she told me her husband had found a tract in a cotton seed bag and brought it to her to read. When she read it she found out that the seventh day is the Sabbath and began looking for a Church that kept the Sabbath.

One day she was in Birmingham and met Elder C. Sampson Myles who baptized her at the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church. She then returned to her home and Cropwell and donated the property for the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Pell City. Interestingly, when a woman and her husband donated the pews for the church, we learned that as a girl it was her job to place tracts in the bags of cotton seed her family sold. For my theme I used "From a Cotton Seed Bag." Now that a theme has been selected writing becomes easier.

Your narrative should include stories that show God's work for and through your church. After all it is God's church. You will also want to include the contributions of each pastor and list some of the members who joined during his ministry. Be sure to list all of the charter members by name.

Your history can be organized in a chronological or a topical format. The chronological format will work well in most cases. However, if you are doing comprehensive history of your church the topical approach may be better.

The topical approach will have chapters of sub-chapters that deal with the pastors, the buildings and their architecture, the worship style and how it has changed over the years, evangelistic outreach, the church school and its teachers and alumni, etc.

How do you deal with deaths? It is appropriate to include a memorial page that lists all deceased members. This information can be gathered from the clerk's records.

After you have finished writing it is wise to submit your manuscript to knowledgeable persons for review. You will want to have it edited for grammar and historical accuracy. This will require patience and the willingness to accept constructive criticism.

### **Illustrating Your History**

*Photographs* – People love to look at pictures. Choose good quality photos that will help tell your story. Photos provide many clues to the past such as what former churches looked like and how people dressed. Photos also help your readers remember and highlight special events and people.

*Statistical Charts and Graphs* – An interesting way to handle statistics is to present them in graphs or charts that can be used in the appropriate places in your history. Some statistics that you might choose to include would be membership growth, tithe growth, etc.

### **Publishing Your History**

You are now ready to publish your manuscript so that it can be shared with your church, community, historians and other interested persons. There are several options available to you – a book, the history section in a souvenir book, a brochure, as a history page on your church website, a PowerPoint slideshow or a DVD presentation. Select one or two formats that will meet the desires of your church and its budget.

If you publish your history in a book or pamphlet be sure to distribute complimentary copies to your local libraries, historical society and the state and local archives.

### Ways to Use Your History

*Publish a Timeline* – You may decide to publish your timeline. If so, select photos to illustrate it and have a sign company that does digital signs design and print it on a large banner for display at your church anniversary or homecoming. The timeline can also be published in book form.

*Church Family History Scrapbook* – Purchase a scrapbook with acid-free pages and give each family in the congregation a page. On the front of the page they should place a photo of their family and write the story of how their family became members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On the back of the page they should draw their family tree and indicate all members who are members of the church.

When the scrapbook is completed place it on a stand near the pulpit. Each week you will invite a family to invite their relatives to church. During the service take a moment to tell how they joined the church, invite the family to come up to the altar and pray for them.

You will also find it beneficial to share bits of your history in the church bulletin or newsletter such as history quizzes, brief articles, dramatic presentations, etc.

### How to Submit Your History to the Conference Office

Your completed unpublished history should be submitted to the your conference for preservation. The typewritten manuscript should be submitted in Microsoft Word or WordPerfect format along with a hardcopy printed on white acid-free paper. Photos that are submitted should be printed at a photo lab so that they can be used for publication. If digital photos or scans are submitted they should be shot with a camera set at 3 mega-pixels or higher or scanned at 300 dpi and submitted on a CD.

Everything should then be placed between cardboard, placed in a 9x12 envelope and mailed to your conference office.

# Research Resources

Church History Worksheet

Church Organization Report Form

Adventist Related Research Resources





**Pastor List**

List the Pastors, their dates of service, and significant achievements

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTE:** Please include with this list pictures pastors, tent meetings, special programs and any other item of historical value if available.

**Prominent Member List**

Prominent Members and their contributions or services (Please include pictures when available)

Member \_\_\_\_\_  
Contributions \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





## Church Organization Report Form

(The church pastor or clerk is asked to send this form to the Conference Office within 30 days after the organization of a new congregation.)

Name of Church or Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

### Where Was The Church Organized?

Building: \_\_\_\_\_

—  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Church Pastor at time of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference President at time of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please include a copy of the minutes:*

### How Was The Church Started?

(Be sure to tell who was involved, what was done, why the church was organized, where it happened, and when it happened. Use an extra sheet if necessary.)

**Photos** Please include a picture of the building where this church is worshipping, the organization ceremony, charter members and pastor, evangelistic meeting, etc.

**Pastor List**

List the Pastors or Lay Pastor with their dates of service, and significant achievements

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Achievements \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Please include with this list pictures pastors, tent meetings, special programs and any other item of historical value if available.

**Prominent Member List**

Prominent Members and their contributions or services (Please include pictures when available)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

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## Adventist Related Research Resources

### I. Online Resources

- American Association for State and Local History  
[www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org)
- Center for Adventist Research  
<http://www.andrews.edu/library/car/index.html>
- Ellen G. White® Archives and Database Resource  
<http://www.whiteestate.org/>
- Seventh-day Adventist Archives  
[www.adventistarchives.org](http://www.adventistarchives.org)
- British Union conference Archives  
<http://www.adventisthistory.org.uk/>
- SDA Obituary Database  
[www.andrews.edu/library/car/sdapiobits.html](http://www.andrews.edu/library/car/sdapiobits.html)
- SDA Periodical Index  
[www.andrews.edu/library/car/sdapiindex.html](http://www.andrews.edu/library/car/sdapiindex.html)
- Virtual SDA Library Union Catalog  
<http://www.andrews.edu/library/vcat/sdaunionlist.html>
- SDA Union List of Periodicals  
<http://www.andrews.edu/library/vcat/jrntitles.html>

## **II. Repositories**

Loma Linda Heritage Room, Del E. Webb Memorial Library

Loma Linda University, 11072 Anderson Street, Loma Linda, California 92350

(909) 558-4942

- Ellen White Estate, Oakwood College Library  
Oakwood College, 7000 Adventist Blvd., Huntsville, AL 35896  
(Phone: 256-726-7000)
- Oakwood College Archives, Oakwood College Library  
Oakwood College, 7000 Adventist Blvd., Huntsville, AL 35896  
(Phone: 256-726-7000)
- South Central Conference Archives,  
South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
715 Youngs Lane, Nashville, TN 37207  
(Phone: 615-226-6500)

## **III. Seventh-day Adventist Libraries in the United States**

Andrews University Library . . . . . <http://www.andrews.edu/library/>

Atlantic Union College . . . . . <http://library.atlanticuc.edu/>

Columbia Union College . . . . . <http://www.cuc.edu/library/>

La Sierra University . . . . . <http://www.lasierra.edu/library/>

Loma Linda University . . . . . <http://www.llu.edu/llu/library/>

Oakwood College . . . . . <http://www.oakwood.edu/library/>

Pacific Union College . . . . . <http://library.puc.edu/library/index.shtml>

Southern Adventist University . . . . . <http://library.southern.edu/>

Southwestern Adventist University . . . . . <http://library.swau.edu/>

Union College . . . . . <http://www.ucollege.edu/library/>

Walla Walla College Library . . . . . <http://www.wwc.edu/academics/library/>

### III. Periodicals

#### Southern Missionary Society

- *Gospel Herald, I*
- *Southern Missionary*
- *Gospel Herald, II*

#### Southeastern Union

- *Field Tidings*

#### Evangelistic (Colporteur) Journals

- *Southern Agent* 1891-190
- *Southern Review* 1901
- *Tennessee River Watchman*
- *Southern Watchman* 1901-
- *Watchman* 1905-1946
- *These Times* 1946-1984

#### Southern Union

- *Southern Review* - 1901
- *Southern Watchman* 1901 -
- *Report of Progress* 1907-1910
- *Southern Union Worker* - 1910-1932
- *Southern Tidings* 1932 - present

#### General Conference

- *Adventist Review and Herald*

### IV. Books and Directories

- Conference Directories
- *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*
- *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*
- *From So Small a Dream*, Louis Hansen
- *We Have Tomorrow*, Louis B. Reynolds
- *Mission to Black America*, Ron Graybill
- *Ellen G. White Biography*, Arthur White

## **Sample Church Histories**

Timeline: Lima Drive SDA Church, Lexington, KY

Narrative: First SDA Church, Springfield, TN



*Elder Alonzo Barry was the first pastor of the Colored Seventh-day Adventist congregation in Lexington. The Kentucky Leader describes him as being "... about 57 years old age and nearly a pure African." The Kentucky Leader, February 25, 1894.*

"A Convert" is the earliest known newspaper article referring to the colored Seventh-day Adventists in Lexington. It appeared in *The Kentucky Leader* on February 25, 1894. It may be seen in the church library and the Heritage Room.

## AN "ADVENT" CHURCH

Formed By a Score of Lexington Colored People.

The Colored Seventh Day Adventists of Lexington, to the number of eighteen, yesterday formed themselves into a church, Elders R. M. Kilgore and H. S. Shaw officiating. The congregation starts off well, with prospects of future growth.

The announcement had been made in the colored churches Sunday evening that baptism would be administered Monday night at the Christian Church, permission having been given the Adventists by the pastor, but they were notified yesterday by the pastor that the elders of the church had met together and passed a resolution denying the use of their pool. Quite a large congregation met at the Christian Church last night but were disappointed in the non-appearance of the Adventist brethren. They were kindly tendered the use of the Main Street Baptist Church, and the services took place there this afternoon. The closing meeting will take place tonight at 317 North Upper street.

Leader. December 11, 1894

p. 3 col. 3



## Historical Highlights

of the  
Lima Drive Seventh-day Adventist Church  
1894 - 2004

### 1855

- Mary E. Britton, Kentucky's first female African-American physician, is born. She would become a charter member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lexington. Her sister Julia Britton-Hooks, grandson is Benjamin Hooks, former president of the NAACP.

### 1892

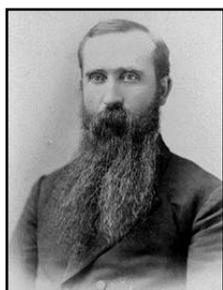
- The Colored Orphan and Industrial Home is founded by a prominent group of African-American women which including Mary E. Britton as founding director. It was at 644 Georgetown St.

### February 25, 1894

- Early report of the growing congregation at Lexington under leadership of Elder Alonzo Barry who was about 57 years old. Converts include: Attorney J. Alexander Chiles, wife, W. C. Taylor, principal of Colored School No. 2, Mary E. Britton, Emma Warfield and several others. ("A Convert", *The Kentucky Leader*, Sunday, February 25, 1894.) Earlier reports had appeared in several of the earlier issues of the *Standard*, the negro newspaper of Lexington.



*Alonzo Barry*



*Robert Kilgore*

### December 10, 1894

- The Colored Seventh-day Adventists of Lexington are formed into a church with Elder Robert M. Kilgore and H. S. Shaw officiating. (*Leader*, December 11, 1894, p. 3, column 3) A baptism was held at

the Main Street Baptist Church and evening meetings held at 317 North Upper Street.

### 1904

- Mary E. Britton, becomes first African-American woman to practice medicine in Lexington after graduating from the American Missionary College in Chicago. She practiced medicine, specializing in hydrotherapy and electrotherapy, from 1904 through 1923 at her home at 545 North Limestone Street while maintaining her social activism. She is buried in Lexington Cove Haven Cemetery. Britton wrote hundreds of newspaper articles against racial segregation for such noted newspapers as the *American Citizen*, *The Daily Transcript* and *The Kentucky Leader*.



*Dr. Mary E. Britton*



### July 1, 1906

- First services of First Seventh-day Adventist Chapel in their new chapel is announced for July 7, 1906. Officers include Elder J. F. Brice, or H. A. Tandy and J. Alexander Chiles, Trustees, and

## Historical Highlights

Dr. Mary E. Britton, church clerk. ("Colored Notes", *The Kentucky Leader*, July 1, 1906. Sec. 1 p. 3 col. 7)

### 1907

• Lexington has 8 African-American physicians, 3 African-American dentists, and 4 African-American lawyers practicing in the city by this year. J. Alexander Chiles was one of the lawyers, and Mary E. Britton was one of the physicians. Both of them were members of the Lexington congregation.

### November 20, 1908

• Elder A. O. Burrill, President of Kentucky Conference visits First SDA Chapel.

### December 9, 1908

• Board members meet to decide two important questions. One, whether to withdraw from the conference or not; and two, whether to send their tithe to the conference. They voted to stay with the conference but not to remit their tithe. The vote to hold the tithe failed when members who did not vote to hold tithe insisted that their tithe be faithfully remitted to conference.

### October 13, 1909

• Final \$50.00 is raised to pay off the church building.

### October 21 and 24, 1909

• A. J. Haysmer field secretary of the North American Negro Department visits First Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### November 17, 1909

• First SDA Chapel votes to "connect itself with the work as organized by the conference known as the North American Negro Department" and to send their tithes and offerings to the same.

• Emma O. Warfield, a charter member and "one of Lexington's most prominent colored women," dies. She had been involved "with every movement for the uplift of her race." (Obituary)

### April 10, 1910

• James Alexander Chiles, trustee of First SDA Church, argues case against Chesapeake & Ohio Railway before U. S. Supreme Court in an effort to desegregate railroad coaches.



*J. Alexander Chiles*

### October 10, 1910

• Elder Joseph H. Laurence is invited to assist Elder Brice in conducting an evangelistic meeting for Lexington.

### September 13, 1911

• Church votes to send tithe to the conference.

### 1925

Mary E. Britton dies.

### 1943

Pastor William J. Cleveland

### 1944-1945

Pastor Norman G. Simons



*Norman G. Simons*

Church Officer's elected for 1909

Deacons . . . . . Brother H. A. Tandy  
J. Alexander Chiles

Deaconesses . . . . . Mary B. Brice  
Emma O. Warfield

Trustees . . . . . H. A. Tandy  
J. A. Chiles  
Cooper Brice

Clerk . . . . . Sister Mary E. Britton

Treasurer . . . . . J. A. Chiles

Librarian . . . . . Fannie J. Chiles

Organist . . . . . Mary B. Brice

Assistant Organist . . . . . Alma Tibbs

Sec'y of Missionary Society . Alma Tibbs

Chorister . . . . . H. A. Tandy

Local Elder . . . . . James Frank Brice.



*Fannie J. Chiles  
First Librarian*

## Historical Highlights

### 1946

**Pastor Edgar T. Mimms**

Edgar T. Mimms was known for his powerful preaching. He pastored the Magazine Street Church and came to Lexington every third Sabbath. Because he pastored four churches he sometimes preached at three churches on Sabbath.

### 1947-1948

**Pastor Charles R. Graham**

### 1949-1952

**Pastor Joseph N. Richardson**

### 1952-1954

**Pastor Jerome A. James**

### 1955

**Pastor Richard C. Brown**

### 1956-1957

**Pastor Leonard Newton**

- Came as evangelist and conducted tent meeting for church.

### 1957

**Pastor Ralph P. Peay**

Elder Peay held an Evangelistic Meeting.

### 1958-1960

**Pastor Benjamin W. Abney, Jr.**

### 1961

**Pastor Donald L. Crowder**

- Conducted Crusade on West Fifth and Upper Street.

### 1961

**Pastor Sherman H. Cox**

Had good rapport with youth.

### 1962-1963

**Pastor Earl L. Howard**

- Esther P. Walker - Civil Rights Activist.

### 1964-1967

**Pastor Cyril A. Myers**

- Pastor Myers and his wife came from Trinidad. He ran a tent meeting during which Sisters Hattie Slaughter, Mary Brown and Hickman, and brothers Robinson, Higgins, Wilson were baptized.

### 1967-1972

**Pastor Lafayette Williams**

- Built new church on Lima Drive
- The church on Fifth and North Upper was sold to Walter and Marian Dunn on July 6, 1971.



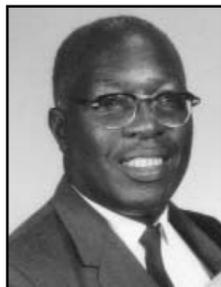
### 1972-1973

**Pastor Joseph W. McCoy**

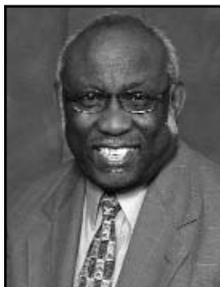
- Had an interdenominational choir.



*Charles Graham*



*Joseph Richardson*



*Leonard Newton*



*Benjamin Abney, Jr.*



*Donald Crowder*



*Lafayette Williams*

## Historical Highlights



*Cyril Myers*



*Earl Howard*



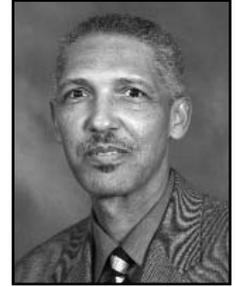
*Wallace J. Mitchell*



*Robert Taylor*



*Doc Hatcher*



*Vincent White*

- Established first church basketball team with cheerleaders.
- Purchased Hammond organ.

### 1974-1975

**Pastor Gerald D. Penick**

- Organist, pianist and choir director.
- Piano is purchased for fellowship hall

### 1977

**Pastor Wallace J. Mitchell**

### 1978-1979

**Pastor Robert (Bob) Taylor, Jr.**

Purchased 1952 church bus

### 1980-1983

**Pastor William Monk**

- During Elder Monk's ministry several celebrities such as Ben Carson and Richard Penniman visited our church.
- Had Annual Community Guest Day on which Elder E. E. Cleveland preached. Many government officials attended including Governor Martha Lane Collins.
- "Wings of Praise", an a capella male singing group, was formed. Rodney Morris, Jesse Heard, Tyrone Felder, Jim Lyons, Alvin Wilson, William "June Bug" Slaughter and Greg Gill.
- Mortgage burning celebration is held in February 1982
- Plexiglass windows are installed in Sanctuary during October 1982
- Church purchases 1982 Ford van

### 1985

**Pastor Doc C. Hatcher**

- Pastor Hatcher and his wife, Patricia,

were excellent in the work of Community Service.

- Ran tent meeting and baptized approximately 25 persons.

### 1985-1989

**Pastor Orlando E. Rudley**

- Published Annual Reports for Church
- Invited Elder George Rainey from California to run Tent Meeting in Lexington.
- Published church newsletter called, "Cutting Edge".

### 1989-1992

**Pastor Milton Johnson**

- Repaired church bus and carried Pathfinders to Washington, DC and Bowie, Maryland.
- Elder Joseph and Nannie Caise led out in raising money through Annual Memorial Concerts, to purchase baby grand piano for church.
- Church improvements are made: New chairs are purchased rostrum, air conditioner and furnace are installed
- James Thornton painted mural for baptistry.

### 1992-1995

**Pastor Vincent White, Sr.**

- Ran Revelation Seminar on Cable Station.
- Interviewed by Radio Station when David Koresh situation occurred in Waco, Texas.
- Very active with members.
- Mrs. Mauneza Lyons, was ordained as first female elder on Lima Drive Church.
- Had Homecoming for church

## Historical Highlights



*Alexander Lampkin*

Purchased light fixtures for the sanctuary

### 1996-1998

**Pastor Alexander Lampkin**

- Had radio ministry called “Breakfast Buddies” on 1250 A.M “The Light”.
- Very interested in members. He was faithful in member visitation and care.
- Ran tent meeting on Georgetown and Price Road.

### 1999

**Pastor William Pergerson**

- Ran Revelation Seminars and baptized largest number of persons ever baptized in history of church. Among them were Andrea Johnson and Elaine Stewart.
- New church van is purchased.

### 2000-2004

**Pastor Melvyn Hayden, III**

- Organized Hispanic Congregation, very involved in community.
- Carried Choir to Washington, Chicago, Battle Creek, and General Conference.
- After Care Program conducted by

Myla Humphreys and then Tara Bailey.

- New Church Computer donated by Elder and Sis. Caise.
- Library built and dedicated. Sis. Mary Brown is librarian.
- Design and decorate Heritage Hall.
- 2004 New tables and deep freezer purchased for Fellowship Hall.
- Women's Ministry remodel Lobby
- New video projector donated by Bro. Patrick and Cathy Adu-Peasah.
- New satellite dish donated by the late Bro. Larry Lewis installed and dedicated.



*Melvyn Hayden*

### Thanks to Interim Pastors

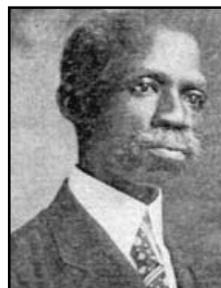
Numerous other pastors served our congregation as interim pastors or evangelists over the years. They include: John G. Thomas, Ivan A. Christian, Fitzgerald H. Jenkins, Joseph L. Folette, Sr., William H. Winston, Sr., H. J. Miller, William J. Cleveland, Charles C. Cunningham, George I. Pearson, John Wagner, Jr. and Dana Edmond.



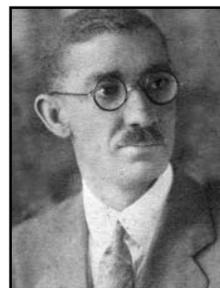
*Joseph Laurence*



*John G. Thomas*



*A. C. Chatman*



*Lyle S. Follette*



*Ivan A. Christian*



*H. G. Miller*



*Fitzgerald H. Jenkins*



*John Wagner, Jr.*

# We've Come This Far by Faith . . .

*History of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Springfield*



Dr. Theodore Bullard  
*Founder*

The message of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church came to Springfield in 1951 through Dr. Theodore H. Bullard who gave Bible studies to Lewis W. Brewer, one of his patients from Springfield. Before long Dr. Bullard rejoiced to see him baptized into the Me-harry Boulevard Seventh-day Adventist Church. After becoming a Seventh-day Adventist, Bro. Brewer gave 20th Century Bible Studies and was a literature evangelist. One of his burdens was to see a church in Springfield. For almost ten years he prayed and talked to various persons about organizing a church in Springfield. During the late fifties God sent the conference president, Elder W. W. Fordham, and Elder Ned A. Lindsey to Springfield to study the possibilities for evangelism.

They were encouraged by what they saw and shortly thereafter Elder Ned A. Lindsey pitched a tent at 1520 Richard Street with the belief that God desired a church here in Springfield and baptized twelve or more persons. Lavetta Dent and other members from Riverside Chapel Seventh-day Adventist Church came to help with this church. This meeting produced some pillar families with members in the church today. The families which made up the first pioneers were L. W. Brewer and his wife, Dorothy Porter Dowlen, and his wife, Beatrice, along with their families and Dr. T. H. Bullard who transferred his membership to Springfield to serve in the new church he helped to organize. The new company of believers called themselves the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Springfield. Bro. L. W. Brewer became the local elder of the new church.

They met in a rented storefront on Thirteenth Street, the Hardshell Baptist Church, and Bransford High School while they purchased the lot the tent meeting had been held on and built a nice red

brick church. It was while they worshipped at Bransford High School that Mrs. Ethel Campbell, a home economics teacher, joined First Church.

In 1959 the church was built on a "pay-as-we-go" plan. While they were still building the church Elder Lindsey teamed up with his uncle, Elder Von Goethe Lindsey, to conduct a meeting in the church. The Lord added Lucy Garrett, Beulah Frazier, Della Darden, Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Scott, Junior Menesee, Pearlne Gault and the Yates family. The Yates, who were white, chose to transfer to Cross Plains, Tennessee to help with a church there.

Elder Edwin J. Humphrey and his wife, Margaret, succeeded Elder Lindsey as the pastor of First Church. It was during a church revival conducted by Elder Humphrey that John Collier and his wife, Willie, were baptized.

Elder E. J. Humphrey was followed by Elder Thomas M. Rowe who was succeeded by Elder Marvin Custard who labored long and hard in the Springfield area sometimes as pastor and at other times under the direction of Elders J. L. Butler and Patrick Vincent who also served as pastors of First Church. It was during Elder Custard's ministry that Charles and Neda Moore came to help. Elder and Sister Moore have driven back and forth from Nashville to Springfield to serve First Church for more than 20 years.

However, the enemy of the soul was also busy, sin increased, and captured some of the young pioneers; others fell asleep in Christ to await His soon return and rest from battle. During the dark period of the late 60's and 70's the light of this church flickered as if to go out, but the love of the Father merely trimmed His candle so it could become a brighter light.

By the mid 70's when only a handful of the faithful pioneers were left, Satan attacked hoping to destroy the group. He thought his victory was sure. But he had not planned on what God would



*Lewis and Dorothy Brewer became the first Seventh-day Adventists in Springfield.*

## First Seventh-day Adventist Church Mortgage Burning Celebration

do through Pastor Doc Hatcher and his wife, Pat. Pastor Hatcher started in Springfield with a door to door Bible Study Program. Then he completed his counter attack with a six week tent effort. At the close of the meeting Daryel and Frieda McGarnett, James and Angela Traughber and their families were added to the church.

Bro. Charles Moore became the First Elder. Also, during these years the Gospel Advent Choir was formed to strengthen the church and to witness to the Springfield community.

In 1979, Elder Henry S. Holt was placed as pastor of First Church after raising up the New Life Church in Nashville. Under Elder Holt's ministry, Marshall Johnson, a young theology graduate of Oakwood College, was sent by Elder Holt to Springfield in 1980.

Marshall Johnson became the First Elder of the church and with Traughber, McGarnett and Moore, became a battle ax in God's hand. With ministries that assaulted the enemy camp they violently took back lost ground the devil thought he had. These ministries were Open Air Revivals, Health Screenings, Health and

Temperance Parades, preaching in area churches, Jail Ministry, Family Days, Religion and Theology Class (for preaching), Bible study training, the Family Circle Radio Broadcast, Upper Room Discussions, Moments with the Elders, hospital and nursing home programs just to name a few.

With many of these ministries in place God saw it was time for a tent to reap the harvest. In 1983 Pastor Morris Patterson and wife, Pam, with First Church conducted another tent meeting. Elder Marshall Johnson, Daryel McGarnett, and James Traughber along with their wives served as Bible workers with two Bible workers from Oakwood College. This tent meeting resulted in thirty baptisms.

These new members included: Gertrude Brewer, Marie Demonbreum and family, Joyce Doss and family, Lucy Brewer and family, Lois Brewer, Cherry Clemons, Ruby Brewer, Rosa Gardner, Barbara Williams, Jean Darden, Annette Harris, Lucy Darden, Huel R. Hurt, William Perry, Anthony James, Miriam Simeon, LaBronnda Black, Beverly Mitchell, and Chad Dowlan.

The Family Circle Radio Broadcast began in 1983 by Bro. Eugene Sutton. The current broadcast speaker was Daryel McGarnett, who has preached the gospel on WDBM every third, fourth and fifth Sunday since 1985.

In 1985 God sent Elder George Pearson and his wife, Lou, to First Church as Pastor. The Jail Ministry was placed into the hands of Elder James Traughber who was assisted by Marshall Johnson and Charles Moore. In just two years the Lord added twelve souls from the Springfield Jail to the body of Seventh-day Adventist believers.

With the work of soul winning prospering, there arose a need for more space. The small three classroom church could not house the family adequately. Sis. Angela Traughber shared her vision and dream of a new church. Under Elder Pearson's ministry the drive to build a new church began in 1986 and approximately \$5,000 was raised in a short time.

In 1987 God sent yet another man, Elder R. Steven Norman, III and his wife, Elaine, to First Church. He came with the selfsame vision of soul winning

### Founder and Former Pastors of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Springfield, TN



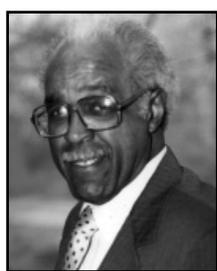
Edwin J. Humphrey  
1959-1962



Thomas M. Rowe  
1963-1965



Marvin Custard  
1965-1971



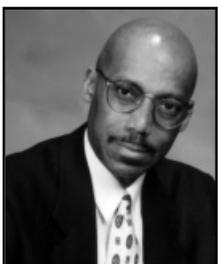
J. LaCount Butler  
1972-1973



Patrick Vincent  
1974-1976



Dock Hatcher  
1977-1979



Henry S. Holt  
1980-1981



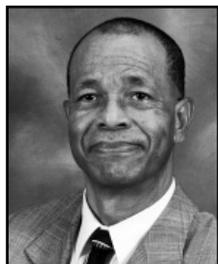
George I. Pearson  
1985-1987



R. Steven Norman, III  
1987-1994



Marshall Johnson  
1996-2003



Roy Patterson  
2003

**NOT PICTURED**  
Ned A. Lindsey  
1957 - 1958

Morris Patterson  
1982 -1984

## First Seventh-day Adventist Church Mortgage Burning Celebration



*Bright Stars Children's Choir with Director Neda Moore, 1988.*



*Sanctuary Choir under direction of Angela Traughber in 1988.*

and a new Church building. The years 1987-1989 were given to soul winning. Pastor Norman preached a church revival and conducted Revelation Seminars. These three meetings along with Bible studies given by the local elders added to the number of believers: Jeff and Tammy Jamison, Tonya Green, Della Darden and her daughter Christy, Shala, Shatarrissee and Shawn Traughber, Timothy Traughber, Edward Jones, and Antoinette Bailey. Elder H. L. Cleveland preached a six week church meeting. The membership was then 96 members strong.

All minds then turned to a new church home when Angela Traughber was referred to a church on Tom Austin Highway. Since the beginning of the Church Building Fund Drive \$15,000.00 had been raised. However, \$4,000 was spent making necessary repairs on the Richard Street building. The

church needed to raise \$12,000.00.

Everyone prayed, sacrificed, and participated in Elder Traughber's fund raising programs and in fifteen months God blessed the church to raise \$12,000.00 for a total of \$23,000.00. The South Central Conference added \$20,000.00. First Church then borrowed \$82,000.00 from First American Bank in Nashville and purchased a lovely two year old church at 3263 Tom Austin Highway.

Dedication services were held on April 4-6, 1991. Sabbath services began at Richard Street, followed by a motorcade to the new church. After the ribbon cutting ceremony we had a day of celebration and much rejoicing!

This small body of believers thrive on attempting the impossible and touching the intangible hand of God. As the congregation began to settle in their new sanctuary, that God had blessed them

with, they were not use too so much room, a big mortgage and bigger plans for evangelizing.

Under the leadership of Pastor R. Steven Norman, III and First Elder Marshall Johnson we set out with much prayer to plan carefully, soul winning and cost effectiveness to meet our new church expenses and thank God they believed in the pay off mortgage early concepts for the church. We never missed one payment. (Praise ye the Lord!)

When Pastor R. Steven Norman, III accepted departmental responsibilities with the South Central Conference, Pastor Marshall Johnson became the new Pastor for the Springfield Church and James Traughber was named Head Elder. Johnson's goals were the same as our past leaders: evangelism, nurturing, stewardship, growth of the church choir and retiring our mortgage early.



*Those who worshiped with us on our first Sabbath in the new church.*



*Daryel McGarnet on Radio Broadcast.*

## First Seventh-day Adventist Church Mortgage Burning Celebration

The church had many musicians that blessed our services on Sabbath morning. We pay tribute to Robert Brown, Johnny Gardner and now Duran Cunningham. These musicians were humble servants of God and we pay a special tribute to each one of them as they have played and ministered to the choir and church.

From 1997 to present Jody Traugher-Simmons and her family were baptized in the church and she couldn't keep quiet, she had to tell her mom and her mom attended an evangelistic meeting at the church with Doug Batchelor and she decided to follow God all the way and was baptized. Jody and Sis. Mattie Washington started bringing others with them and eventually Tamber, Veronica, Eric, Angie Miles and Antwoine Simmons were baptized.

In 2003, the Mass Choir became the Victory in Praise Choir and the Bright Stars as they were once known became God's Little Blessings. The Choir began its evangelistic campaign by encouraging members to be in choir, attended concerts and ministered at Youth Federations. First Church has been tremendously blessed by our Minister of Music, Tim Traugher, who has been faithful in working with all Choirs, Praise Teams,

and Dance Teams. In 2003 under the leadership of Minister of Music, Tim Traugher, a dance team originated and they called themselves Krump for Christ or KFC.

In 2003, Pastor Marshall Johnson was transferred to work with another congregation in Mississippi and Pastor Roy Patterson was introduced as our Interim Pastor with Elder James Traugher as Head Elder. Pastor Patterson motivated the church to continue to work and evangelize in the community. Again, we were blessed with a Pastor that wanted to see the church grow in numbers and in spirit.

In 2004, Pastor Alfonzo Greene, III was chosen by the conference to be our next Pastor. His goals were so similar to the other pastors that we were amazed. His youthfulness and eagerness to work with the young people encouraged so many of them to stand strong for Christ. He immediately wanted to work with the church to help retire the mortgage early. During his time spent in Springfield, he has had the Conference Evangelist, Elder Stafford to preach a weekend revival and the church was truly blessed.

Elder James Traugher led our mountain teams in a campaign to pay

off the mortgage in March and with great success: Mt. Moriah, Mt. Nebo, Mt. Zion, Mt. Calvary and Mt. Carmel who were led by the Elders and Deacons, made the campaign a complete success.

The Big Blue Church at the end of your search, never waivers when approached about a task, they just move forward and proclaims, "that God is an Awesome God and He is Worthy to Be Praised, no task too big or too small."

### "IN LOVING MEMORY"

Dr. T. H. Bullard  
 Gertrude Brewer  
 Ethel Campbell  
 Sheila Collier  
 Willie Collier  
 John Collier, Sr.  
 Rosetta Crowe  
 Porter Dowlen  
 Chad Dowlen  
 Beulah Frazier  
 Lucy Garrett  
 Pearlne Gault  
 Connie Hardin  
 Aldine Harding  
 Annette Harris  
 Huel R. Hurt  
 Rachel Jones  
 Fred Jordan  
 Betty Lark  
 Irene Long  
 Kirk Mannese  
 Junior Menesee  
 Bernice Noel  
 Bennie Scott  
 Lillie Scott  
 Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Scott  
 Gladys Smith  
 Mary Suggs  
 Theodore Suggs

*"Blessed are the dead  
 that die in the Lord"*



*Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new church on April 6, 1991. Left to right: Pastor Norman, Elder Traugher, Lewis Brewer, Angela Traugher and President Dudley.*