

LOVELADY BAPTIST CHURCH

*By Mrs. Ella Mainer Young*

Shortly after 1870, the date not definite, a few earnest citizens of the little hamlet of Lovelady, realizing the urgent necessity of spiritual guidance and training of the young, as well as the adult of the community, came together for the purpose of organizing a Sunday School.

Since there were no church houses to serve the various denominations represented in the town, this earnest group, led by T. N. Mainer, of Baptist faith, and Mrs. Belle Barbee, of Methodist faith, met in the frame building then used for day school. Thus came into being the first religious organization of Lovelady, a union Sabbath School. Prominent among the names of teachers listed in an old class record book belonging to T. N. Mainer in 1876 were the following: Mrs. M. E. Cone, Mrs. Ida Adams, B. G. Freeman, Dr. H. L. Hogg, E. E. Larue.

Shortly after the organization of the Sunday School, those of Baptist belief, together with the Knights and Ladies of Honor, erected a two-story building on the site of the present church. In the upper story were held the meetings of the lodge, while the lower served for church auditorium and Sunday School room.

The early Lovelady church was served by pastors who lived in Crockett, dividing their time between the churches. Among these were such outstanding men as A. Armstrong and Bill Gaddy.

In 1909, during the pastorate of T. N. Mainer, a brick building was erected, and this since has housed a membership composed largely of the descendants of the early pioneers, who laid the foundation of a church that has sent forth from its protecting fold men and women imbued with a fervid zeal for righteous service to humanity whether ministering in the high realms of the highest offices of our state or its halls of learning. Among these were Miss Myrtle Mainer, the wife of Hon. Pat M. Neff, former Governor, and now president of Baylor University, and Miss Mildred Collins, wife of Homer P. Rainey, President of the University of Texas.