

THE GUNNISON BAPTIST CHURCH

The Gunnison Baptist Church, formerly known as the First Baptist Church of Bolivar County, was established about 1856. The first church building was located three miles southeast of Gunnison on the Columbus Arnold Place. This building, abandoned during the War Between the States, was later rebuilt and moved three times as the settlement of membership changed.

The First Baptist Church of Bolivar County was again moved in 1898—this time to Gunnison. Services were held in the Masonic Lodge and the school house until a building could be erected.

Mrs. Martha Buckley James, Mrs. Evelyn Melchoir and Mrs. Satie Strobbridge were the principal leaders in the building program. The building was completed in 1899.

In 1900, the name of the church was changed from the First Baptist Church of Bolivar County to the Gunnison Baptist Church. Tradition has it that for several years after the founding of the church there were no male members in it, the women managing everything.

The Bolivar County Baptist Association meeting was held in the Gunnison Baptist Church on October 11, 1949. At this time, a special celebration was held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the building of the church in Gunnison. "Many of the former pastors were present and were introduced. Each was given a few minutes of time on the program to tell some of their experiences while in Gunnison. All of them praised Dr. Cockerham as the best friend to the minister and the ministry, and was portrayed as 'the Hero' in the interesting pageant of the progress of the Gunnison Baptist Church."

The church has progressed through the years. In 1960, a new brick educational building was completed. The unit consisted of a large fellowship hall, kitchen, six classrooms and two restrooms.

Another step of progress was made in 1964 when an additional unit was added to the existing educational building after the old sanctuary was moved to the back of the church property. This new addition is of Colonial design and consists of a sanctuary with a seating capacity of 250, a choir room, three classrooms, a pastor's study and two restrooms.

This year the Gunnison Baptist Church has experienced a good year. The membership is 181, there was an average of 113 in Sunday School, 74 in Baptist Training Union, 28 additions to the membership and a total income of \$23,500.00. The church has given an average of \$210.00 per month to world-wide missions this fiscal year.

The total property value is now \$75,000.00 and the Gunnison Baptist Church continues onward and upward for God.

TELEPHONE SERVICE IN GUNNISON

The Cumberland Tel. and Tel. Co. and its successor, the Southern Bell Tel. and Tel. Co., have operated in Gunnison since the former obtained its franchise from the Town of Gunnison in 1898.

The exchanges have been located in three different buildings. The first location was on the second floor, at the rear, of the old Nash Building that burned in 1925. It was then moved to the home of Mrs. Izzy Hughes where it remained until her house was destroyed by fire. Mrs. B. C. Conger erected another building on this site to be used as a telephone exchange and as a home for the chief operator.

Mrs. Hughes' son, Mason Perry, started working for the Southern Bell Tel. & Tel. Co. as a messenger boy, later he was a linesman, then he was manager of the Gunnison office, and when he died he was state superintendent of supplies for that company.

The company now operates a small mechanical exchange for local calls, but currently it has an option to purchase two adjoining pieces of property adjacent to the present exchange, and plans to erect a much larger building upon this lot in 1965. Equipment in this new building will provide direct dialing to any part of the United States.

During the days when the exchange was manually operated, some of the operators were: Miss Daisy Smith, Miss Aurelia Perry, Miss Mary Nance Smith, Miss Margaret Hogue, Reed A. Hogue, F. Eades Hogue, Mrs. Lucile Pease, Charles B. Bland, Miss Annie Ray Davis, Miss Edna Snyder.

Part of the time the exchange was operated on a contract basis, with the manager furnishing operators and utilities.

In the heyday of the manually operated exchange, two day operators and one night operator were employed.

MAYORS OF THE VILLAGE OF GUNNISON AND THE TOWN OF GUNNISON

Name	Tenure
1. Sol Cohn (1853-1901)	1892-1899
2. James Anderson Burt (1871-1949)	1899-1900
3. Sterling Price Blanchard (1862-1931)	1900-1901*
4. James West Shattuck (1837-1909)	1901-1904
5. J. F. Vuncannon	1904-1905
6. M. S. Reuter	1905-1906*
7. William I. Brashears	1906-1913
8. Julius Harry Zadeck (1858-1919)	1913-1915
9. William Randolph Shepherd (1839-1923)	1915-1917
10. Julius Harry Zadeck (1858-1919)	1917-1919
11. Bedford Forrest Morton (1878-1947)	1919 *
12. Lewis Scott Blanchard (1886-1953)	1919-1923
13. D. Frank Callaway (1879-1943)	1923-1926
14. Howard Lea Cockerham, M.D. (1881-1955)	1926 *
15. Robert Sprott McKnight (1883-1957)	1926-1927
16. Lewis Scott Blanchard (1886-1953)	1927-1929
17. Lucene Louis McGee	1929-1931
18. Max R. Block (1867-1961)	1931-1933
19. Howard Lea Cockerham, M.D. (1881-1955)	1933 *
20. Stuart Jackson Holcomb (1876-1942)	1933-1939
21. William Dale Bell, Jr. (1894-)	1939-1943
22. Allen Elisha Warfield (1920-)	1943-1947
23. Scott Seaton Warfield (1917-)	1947-1953
24. Edward Byron Scruggs (1908-) (incumbent)	1953-

*Interim Mayors