

The Churches

Religion followed quickly the birth of the new town, and while many may be shocked at the idea, it is not too surprising the first church services were held in the bar room of the Thomas Hotel, where now stands Hotel Shelbina.

The first church was the Methodist Episcopal, South, part of the Shelbyville Circuit, and the organizer was Rev. Thomas DeMoss. Services were held in 1857, the town's first year.

A year later, in the fall of 1858, Rev. Milford Powers, a Baptist preacher from Florida, in Monroe county, held religious services over William A. Reid's store on Chestnut street. In 1860 the Baptists organized a church with Rev. Henson Thomas, who had moved here from Monroe county, as the first pastor.

Catholics came to Shelbina previous to 1861 and a Father Hogan was the first priest to stop here on his way to serve parishes in Macon and Chillicothe.

A Presbyterian church was organized here in May, 1864.

The Shelbina Christian church became a part of the town in 1866 or 1867, being organized by Elder T. M. Allen of Columbia.

The Second Baptist church was organized in 1871 with Rev. J. B. Hawkins as pastor. He served the church for 30 years. Oldest member of the church now is Mrs. Jennie Pickett, 87.

The A. M. E. (African Methodist Episcopal) church was organized in 1889. It disbanded in the 40s.

The youngest church in Shelbina is the Assembly of God church which erected its church building in 1930 after having held services for some time in homes.

METHODIST CHURCH, Shelbina

This is the oldest church organization in Shelbina, dating back to the first year, 1857, with Rev. Thomas DeMoss the organizer. Not having a church house, services were held in the bar of the Thomas Hotel where later was erected the Waverly House, now known as Hotel Shelbina. Services were also held in Miller's Hall where the present Hayes Furniture Store is located, and in the school house on West Walnut street, later occupied by the home of A. Connely, Sr., and now where Randall Cunningham lives.

The church, though small, was zealous, and after many trials and reverses, joined with the Baptists in 1867 to erect a church building which was known as the B and M church. This church faced east on the corner of E. Walnut and 2nd streets. It was used on alternate Sundays by both congregations. Three members from each church served as trustees.

A committee composed of William A. Reid, John R. Calvert and John J. Taylor was appointed to raise the money for the building. July 28, 1867 it reported having \$1,500. This building was used by both congregations for 13 years.

In 1880 the Methodists bought the interest of the Baptists for \$1,500. The building was torn down and the bricks used in the construction of a new house of worship on the same site. This church was dedicated in 1881 by Dr. John D. Vincil. The cost of the building was \$5,000. The membership was 150 at this time and bi-monthly services were conducted by Rev. W. A. Tarwater.

As far as can be recalled, among the charter members were William A. Reid, Mr. and Mrs. John Calvert, Mr. and Mrs. William Wood and Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Harrison. Among the early preachers were Thomas DeMoss, J. F. Shores, Dennison Mason, Lilburn Rush, R. N. T. Holliday and W. W. McMurtry.

In 1861 Simeon Downing organized four children into the first Sunday School of the infant church.

In 1907 the church membership had increased until a larger and more adequate building was needed. The lot selected was

the corner of East Spruce and Second streets. The cornerstone was laid Friday, August 16, 1907. The last service in the old church was held May 24, 1908 and the first service in the new church was prayer meeting Wednesday evening, May 27. The new building was dedicated Sunday, August 9, by Bishop C. H. Morrison. The estimated cost was \$26,000. Rev. J. N. Boyd was the first pastor in the new church which had been built under the leadership of Dr. W. A. Hanna.

In 1887 the Women's Foreign Missionary Society was organized and when in 1915 the Home Missionary Society came into existence, the two united and became the W.S.C.S.

Alan Wyckoff has been licensed by the church to preach.

The resident church enrollment in 1957 is 541 and the Sunday School enrollment is 300. The pastor is Rev. Earl Griffith.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, Shelbina

In the fall of 1858 Rev. Milford Powers, a Baptist preacher from Florida, in Monroe county, held religious services over William A. Reid's store on Chestnut street.

In 1860 the Baptists organized a church and Rev. Henson Thomas, who moved here from Monroe county, was the first pastor. Among the charter members were T. R. Thomas, J. W. Veal and William Thomas.

As did other early churches of the town, the Baptists held services in the Thomas Hotel; in the school house on W. Walnut street; later the home site of A. Connely, Sr.; Miller's Hall on the west side of Center street, where in succeeding years were located the Minter & Smith and Smith & Bowling Dry Goods Stores, and now occupied by Hayes Furniture Store.

In 1867 the Baptists joined with the Methodists to build a Union Meeting House to be used on alternate Sundays by both congregations. The church was brick and faced the east on the corner of Second and East Walnut streets. The building was used for 13 years by the two denominations and in 1880 the Baptist interest was purchased for \$1,500 by the Methodists who built a church on the same site.

Then the Baptists bought a lot on West Walnut street and erected a church house in 1880-81 at a cost of \$5,500. It was dedicated in 1882 by Rev. William Pope Yearman.

The first deacons were William Huss, A. Connely, Dr. J. W. Ford and Samuel Willis. Early church clerks were Henry Miles, B. F. Munson, J. M. Bates, B. F. Dobyns, D. G. Minter, H. Moss and W. H. Warren.

In 1870 the church had 113 members. In 1910 it had 279 members and in 1933 the total was 309. Today (1957) there are 497 resident members and the Sunday School enrollment is 413.

The building erected in 1881-82 was dismantled the summer of 1917, to be replaced by a larger building better suited to the needs of the congregation. The new building was dedicated Sunday, Oct. 6, 1918. Rev. W. D. Powell of Louisville, Ky., preached the dedicatory sermon and raised \$6,000 necessary to finish paying for the building which cost a total of \$25,000. Rev. Adolph Vollmer was the pastor. The pulpit in the church is the one used in the first church and was made and presented by Charles Miller.

The church sent forth Bro. Aura Smith, Bro. Harry Spurgeon and Bro. Frank Connely as ministers of the gospel. Bro. Connely went to China as a missionary, was a prisoner of the Japanese during World War II, later was sent to Japan where he died in 1956. Miss Fannie Cadwell also went as a missionary, serving in Colorado under the Home Mission Society of the Northern Baptist Convention. Rev. Dudley Kern is the present pastor of the church.

On Oct. 14, 1956 ground was broken for an addition to the