

History of Hillview Baptist Church (1893-1988)

by
Mattie Downey
(1918-2004)

History
of
Hillview
Baptist Church

1893 - 1988

95 Glorious Years

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my husband and his families of Penney's and Downey's who were the history on "The Mountain"; for his patience in remembering; to my oldest deceased son, Howard, who was a feature writer and guided my pen; to my other two children, Sharyn and Steve, that lived and believed in the history; to my grandson, Preston, that told everyone with pride, "Granny is writing a book." Finally to all the children born and reared in Hillview, this is a part of your heritage.

Mattie Downey

Preface

"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever."
Ecclesiastes 1:4

Church histories stir the memories of older members and enable new members to walk happily through doors of the past. New challenges for future progress are more readily accepted as the past and the present are united. Histories can strengthen fellowship and stimulate members to renewed loyalty.

The experiences of the people of God prove beyond question that individuals and congregations are blessed who give proper attention to recalling the high spiritual occasions of the past.

Links in the Chain

"But now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."
I Corinthian 12:18

The Mountain

In the beginning, there was a mountain. Not a part of the Appalachian Chain, but "a great height of land that projected above its surroundings." From the beginning of the nation, it was known to have rich deposits of coal and iron in and around its base. Indians roamed this mountain until they were carried away in 1838 by the Indian Removal Act, but not before the territory was named "Alabama", after a savage Indian Chief. The area became a State in 1819. The Indians believed that this land belonged to God it was for everyone to enjoy. However, the Government began to move into the State, building roads and offering protection from Indians. A poor man could acquire land in the remote mountains just by clearing the wilderness, and by virtue of becoming a land owner, could vote.

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A man did not have time to think of who he was, but rather what he could do. In the 'Mountain' early life, some of the settlers were fugitives from justice or they did not like the life of organized society, but most came with a desire for self-advancement and for a better livelihood.

These people were likely to think little of religion, most of the time. They were a hardy, independent people; rough and uncouth. The few families on this mountain were close-knit, yet were willing to help others. Most of them were farmers, but by the turn of the century (1900), they had become miners or foundry steel workers.

This area was called "Cat Mountain" due to the heavy population of wild cats. These cats could be heard screaming nightly, like a woman screaming. These animals did not disappear until the 1930s. Cat Mountain is in west Jefferson County about seven miles from downtown Birmingham.

"Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard and hold fast...." Revelation 3:3

The Graveyard

On the mountain, there was a graveyard. The markers, some smooth, some new, others rough with age, help tell the history of this mountain and its Church. It never had a name; just identities to match the surroundings. The names and dates on the early 1800 markers are hard to read, but the later dates give a glimpse of settlers that lived in the hills almost a century ago.

At the back edge of the cemetery, black rocks outline many old graves. At one time, they had names and dates, but now are bare. The earliest legible date is 1807. That predates any community in this area, including Birmingham, which was incorporated in 1879 with a population of 2,000. These graves could have been Indians or slaves. The Cherokee Indian was native and was the fairest of all tribes. They became good friends with the white. Many of these Indians became Baptist Ministers. The dates occurring from 1861 to 1865 could have been casualties of the Civil War. It is a possibility that most of the early graves were not people who died of natural causes.

As you roam through the paths, you see tombstones with familiar names: A. W. Bonds, Ambrose Cobb that donated land for the first and only Baptist Church, the family name Nail, a charter member of that church, a kinsman of Matthew Nail, a native son of a native son that was ordained and licensed to preach from this church. He is also a former Youth Director of our church. There are other names that meant much in the life of this mountain and church such as Echols, Bonds, DeVine, Lairmore, Sanford, Thompson, Teers, W. N. Penney who was our first Sunday School Superintendent, and L. R. Sides, our beloved Pastor of the 1930s who dared to rebuild during the Depression Years. He died in the struggle. In 1963, there was a young teenager that was killed in a car-trail collision, and the church met the burial expenses to give him a final resting place. Robinson is another family name that lent itself to the building of our modern Fire Department. Sanford, a deacon and trustee of the cemetery and Donaldson, a treasurer of the church also contributed to the life of the church, along with many others. If there was ever a need of a grave for a family in need, it was always available. There was even an old house in the field behind the graveyard that some believed was haunted.

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The church had an old tradition called Decoration Day that honored the dead by decorating the graves. In times past, it was an all day singing and dinner on the ground, and was always held the second Sunday in May. Now, the cemetery is kept clean by perpetual fund that friends and families have initiated and donations are always appreciated. Everyone is invited to share in this day.

Cemetery business was almost always included in every business meeting and played an important part in the church.

The Old Church

Beside the cemetery is a Baptist Church. The story began at a brush arbor meeting in the woodland of the 'Mountain' in 1893.

Baptist ministers came into Alabama about the time it became a State in 1819. Churches in North Alabama formed Baptist Associations for mutual helpfulness and missionary outreach. No doubt, this part of Jefferson County was white unto harvest. Traveling preachers held revivals and baptisms in new areas in the spring and fall due to the weather. They made rounds in all kinds of weather, praying and visiting, with no thought of reward, short of heaven. It was at such a meeting that eight members entered into an organization of baptized believers.

These were "Reconstruction Years." After four years of Civil War, government was in disarray, money was worthless and families were torn asunder. This small bond of people made a statement for the times they lived by choosing 'New Hope' as their organization's name. These members were aware, as foundational members, that they would have to make decisions that would affect life and practices in this infant church, so they joined the Sulphur Springs Association for fellowship and support. By the end of 1853 (1893?), the church membership grew to 53.

Jefferson County represented a vast field, fully prepared for harvest, and it took the cooperation of many churches to encourage cultivation. In 1894, New Hope dismissed itself from the Sulphur Springs Association and became a charter member, along with 14 other country churches in this area, to form the Mineral Springs Association. In 1894, New Hope held the second district meeting for this association, and for the purpose of closer missionary outreach, stayed with this association until 1904.

Churches were hard to build at this time. There was plenty of timber but hard and expensive to make into lumber. There was an old two story wooden building close to the graveyard in the woods. It was one room upstairs and one down. A Masonic Lodge held its meetings upstairs and school was held downstairs. The walls in the school were painted black for blackboards and burnt wood sticks were used for chalk. The children believed that there was a casket upstairs so they were afraid to climb the stairs. School sessions were after spring planting and fall harvesting. Water was carried from a spring down at the foot of the cemetery. All grades met and studied the same books. This is where New Hope Baptist Church met on Cat Mountain.

G. W. Reed was the first pastor and in 1893 baptized 36, had eleven letters transferred with two decreases with a total enrollment of 53. Services were held once a month, pastor's salary was \$50.00 a year, and business meeting was held the Saturday before. The Baptist preachers in those days were rough outdoorsmen. They usually farmed during the week, so no one could accuse them of preaching for money. They served three or four churches a month and left home early to reach the church field in time for Saturday business meeting and Sunday

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preaching, perhaps all day. He always had an audience and they heard a sermon that did not come from notes or seminary training.

Sunday School came to Alabama in 1891 and New Hope had its first Sunday School in 1896 with an enrollment of 30. W. N. Penney was the first Sunday School Superintendent. Land was donated in 1902 to build the church. It was a one room wooden house with wood shutters that flopped day and night letting wind and rain in around the cracks. It was built close to the old Masonic Hall where they had been meeting and about where the Educational wing now stands. The value of the church property was \$500.00. All ages met together, and membership remained around 50 to 60, but fell to a record low of 22 in 1899, the year of the Spanish-American War. Rev. R. F. Shank was the pastor and stayed four years (1899-1904) and returned the second time in 1924-1925. Rev. Shank rode horseback from Natural Bridge, Alabama. Rev. J. T. Parker came to New Hope and pastored from 1905 to 1907. New Hope dismissed itself from the Mineral Springs Association and joined the Birmingham Association. Baptist have always been individualistic and retain the right to affiliate themselves with any association. If a pastor felt that his church could better flourish in another association, he had a perfect right to influence change. Primitive and Freewill Baptists hold different doctrines from Missionary Baptists and this caused conflicts in the early churches. This may or may have influenced the change of associations; records do not bear this out one way or the other. New Hope stayed in the Birmingham Association until 1910; went back to the Mineral Springs Association in 1911 and held the 21st District meeting. New Hope stayed with Mineral Springs until 1918-1919 when Rev. J. T. Parker became pastor for the second time and influenced the church to return to the Birmingham Association, where it has remained.

The great vice of Americans in those years was drunkenness. Use of alcoholic beverages was common on the American frontier, and drunkenness became excessive. As a result, preaching in those days began or ended on the evils of drink or on abstinence.

The Industrial or Steel Age was changing life on the 'Mountain.' New people moved in and around this area for jobs in the mines. Mining towns sprang up all around Republic, Coalburg, No. 7 and Back Slope. The men were not accustomed to receiving a regular paycheck. As a result, their pay was spent on gambling, drinking or buying gifts for their wives and children. Hence, with money gone and heads aching, they turned to the church for solace. In 1908, New Hope's membership rose to a record enrollment of 126.

Birmingham was becoming a big city and it was legendary for violence and lawlessness. Pratt City and Brookside had their own saloons. It was the combined efforts of the churches and religious groups that pressured Birmingham to vote dry in 1907.

Since the 'Mountain' was a heavily wooded area, it had many bootleggers. Some of the church men were Federal 'Revenuers'. Due to the fact that these people were friends, neighbors and fellow church members made for bad situation.

A jitney operated from Republic to Birmingham. Cars had been invented, but few people owned them. The roads in our area were mostly unpaved. The Old Jasper Highway, forged on top of the wilderness in 1840 to connect Jefferson County's seat of government and Elyton Trading Center with Jasper, was paved.

There were some people here that were of the Catholic faith. The Catholic Mission in Pratt City was founded in 1888. There was no way to reach the Mission except by walking.

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In 1914, New Hope Baptist Church experiences sending the first woman messenger to the Association, who was Mrs. Alva Murphy.

In 1917, the old Lodge Hall burned. Schooling had become compulsory in the 1900s, so school was held, weather permitting, under an oak grove at the intersection of Cherry Avenue and Egret Drive. A three room school house was built in 1920 on this site. The original three rooms are incorporated into the present Hillview Elementary School.

W. F. White was pastor from 1920 to 1922 when electric lights were put into the church. The light bill and custodian's salary totaled \$3.50 a month and \$75.90 was given to missions. The church enrollment was 47 and the value of the church property was \$1,000.00. It was also in 1920 that the church had a woman secretary by the name of Gladys Hinkle.

In 1921, membership was at another all time low of 22, perhaps due to World War I. Baptists Young Peoples Union was initiated and Millard Evans was the Director. In the late 1920s, music rallied the churches. New Hope held singing schools, trained singers, loaned and borrowed songbooks and held singings regularly on Thursday nights and three or four Sunday singings yearly.

“The Great Depression” hit the ‘Mountain’ hard. Before the era, the people were self-sustaining, but life had changed and they were dependent on the ‘Company Store’.

The church house was ravaged by time; the wood shutters could no longer serve their purpose and the inner structure was gone. L. R. Sides was called to New Hope in 1930 and stayed until 1938. He moved his large family into the community and into the hearts of the people. He was just a part-time preacher, but held two Sunday services and prayer meeting.

Opposition was great against a building program due to money. Yet, this Man of God, with his hammer and a majority congregation with the slogan, “By the grace of God, the building will rise again”, began to tear the building down to the floor joists. The building did rise again as a new wooden, one room church house, built on the foundation, but with glass windows. Hallelujah!

A dedication was planned in 1938. However, the courageous Shepherd of New Hope died, and a memorial service was held instead. All of the people of the community gave donations to erect a monument to him.

The ‘Mountain’ became a community and was named Hillview in 1938, but the church voted to retain the name ‘New Hope’.

In 1941, Rev. A. T. Brown was a part-time preacher, but he held four services and prayer meeting every Wednesday night. Crawl space under the auditorium was excavated and turned into Sunday School rooms, restrooms, baptistery, etc. By 1945, Rev. Brown was called as our first full-time pastor with a salary of \$235.00 a month.

In 1951, the church changed its name to Hillview Baptist Church. In 1952 through 1953, Rev. Brown led the church in redecorating the auditorium, complete with stained glass windows. An all time record of 100 tithers was recorded.

In 1955, Rev. John Hogan accepted the call to be our new pastor. During his ministry, there was need of additional educational space. The church first built the basement of the present sanctuary and used it for Sunday School rooms; then constructed the beautiful brick sanctuary with balcony. However, the old building was used until 1957.

“One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever.”

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Historical Facts

“And thou shall remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee...to humble thee and to test thee, to know what was in thine hearts, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or not” Deuteronomy 8:2

Dates affecting the life on the ‘Mountain’

- 1787 - 1850 - The growth in territory was the most striking change in the United States since its birth.
- 1819 - Alabama becomes a state named after a savage Indian Chief.
- Baptist ministers come into Alabama.
- 1838 - The Old Jasper Highway was forged out of the woodlands to connect Jefferson County’s seat of government and Elyton Trading Center with Jasper.
- 1846 - Crumbly Chapel Methodist Church was organized.
(note: Crumly Chapel Methodist Church was organized in 1858)
- 1850 - All white males of age were allowed to vote.
- 1861 - 1865 - During these years, the Civil War was fought and the West was won.
- 1866 - Pratt City Catholic Mission on Catholic Hill was organized.
- 1878 - Pratt City (Coketown) opened a coke mine.
- 1879 - The city of Birmingham was incorporated with a population of 2,000.
(note: Birmingham was incorporated on December 19, 1871)
- 1891 - Sunday School came to Alabama
- 1893 - The New Hope Baptist Church was organized.
- 1898 - The Spanish American War began.
- 1900 - Education became compulsory.
- Automobiles were invented.
- 1907 - Prohibition began.
- 1920 - Women were allowed to vote.
- A three room schoolhouse was built on the ‘Mountain’ and was named North Pratt.

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Customs

“Remember the days of old, consider the year of many generations. Ask the father, and he will show thee, thy elders and they will tell thee.” Deuteronomy 32:7

Baptizing in the earliest church was in Five Mile Creek in Republic. On a Sunday afternoon, but mostly at Revival time, you would see a group of people, holding hands and singing hymns, walking down dusty Old Republic Road (Cherry Avenue) to the creek. It was a three and a half mile walk. After a revival, it might take all day to get them all baptized. You would stay even if you had to walk back after dark.

In the early 1900s, mines opened up around the base of Cat Mountain. Hamilton Slope was one of the mines and they dammed the pond for their use and called it No. 7 Pond. It was located in the general vicinity of Daniel Payne College. Baptizing was done in this pond and other churches used it also. The New Hope congregation walked these four miles on dusty, unpaved Cherry Avenue. It was also a great swimming area for the young folks.

New Hope Baptist Church had an evening Christmas Party every year. After having a play or sermon, Santa Claus came through the front door bringing oranges and apples to everyone. This was the only Christmas some children had. It was complete with a Christmas tree.

Every Sunday was someone's birthday. Anyone who had celebrated a birthday during the week would march down the aisle and give a penny for each year of their age. This included children and adults. The church congregation would sing “Happy Birthday” and the monies collected would be given to the Orphan's Home.

Singing and singing schools became important to Cat Mountain and to New Hope Baptist Church. It was time of learning, as well as enjoyment. Music lessons were rare for most of them, so they were readily accepted. It certainly improved congregational singing. Song books were treasured, but were loaned and borrowed among other churches.

In the late 1920s, the Ganus Brothers, a family of musicians taught the first singing school. Vaughn Music Publishers followed with a two week school. Afterward, singings were held every Thursday night and two or three Sundays a year. Everyone that loved singing would follow the singing groups to other churches. It was a time for courting and fellowships for the young people.

Our own Vera Donaldson started playing the piano for lead singers at the age of twelve. Later, she alternated as pianist at Republic and New Hope Churches. She was also pianist for Pratt City for many years and was pianist at Westwood for nine years. Mrs. Donaldson was our first organist, having taught piano and organ to the local children for years.

All day singing and dinner on the ground was a tradition for Decoration Day on the second day in May. It was a time of remembering old friends and meeting new ones. It was discontinued in the 1960s.

In the 1950s, every Sunday night service was a testimonial time and each one present would stand and recite a scripture verse. No one failed to take part. It developed a greater love for the Bible and certainly helped memories.

The first organ was used for practice by children of the church. It was hoped that this would develop more accompanists for the church.

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Hillview now enjoys a Church-wide Picnic every year. There is also a Church-wide Cookout, sponsored by the Brotherhood and hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hullett every year.

The Salad Bar is a looked-forward-to event. It is sponsored by the Youth of the church in order to raise money for their retreats. Bill Mauldin is the coordinator.

The men of our church, along with the coordinated efforts of several other churches, go once a year to lend a hand in building small Baptist churches. The following list is a list of the places they have helped:

- 1983 - Williamsport, Pennsylvania
- 1984 - Cincinnati, Ohio
- 1985 - Stanford, New York
- 1986 - Hartshorne, Oklahoma
- 1987 - Racine, Wisconsin
- 1988 - Huntington, Indiana

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58 Years as New Hope Baptist Church

- 1893: Eight people organized New Hope Baptist Church as a result of a Brush Arbor Revival. By the end of the year, the church membership was 53. New Hope joined the Sulphur Springs Baptist Association. G. W. Redd was the pastor. Services were held once a month in an existing wood building.
- 1894: New Hope dismissed itself from the Sulphur Springs Association and became a charter member, along with 14 other country churches, to form the Mineral Springs Association (North Jefferson County).
- 1895: The Mineral Springs Association held the second District Meeting at New Hope. The first Sunday School enrollment was 30. W. N. Penney was Sunday School Superintendent.
- 1899: We had an all-time low of 22 enrolled, possibly due to the Spanish-American War.
- 1902: Rev. B. T. Shank, our preacher for four years, led in building a wood church house, which was one big room with wood shutters, that seated 500 and was valued at \$500.00. Membership rises to 55 by 1904.
- 1904: New Hope left the Mineral Springs Association and joined the Birmingham Association to stay with them until 1911.
- 1908: We had an all-time high membership of 126. Jitney service was made available from Republic to Birmingham.
- 1911: New Hope Church goes back to the Mineral Springs Association.
- 1912: New Hope holds the 21st session of the Mineral Springs Association.
- 1914: First woman messenger was sent to the Baptist Association, Mrs. Alva Murphy. (This was before Women's Suffrage.)
- 1918: New Hope goes back to the Birmingham Association to stay.
- 1920: First woman was elected as Church Secretary, Mrs. Gladys Hinkle. (Women's Suffrage had passed) Electric lights were put into the church. Light bill and janitor service totaled \$3.50 a month.
- 1921: The membership dropped to 22, perhaps due to World War I. We began two Sunday services. Baptist Young People's Union was organized with Millard Evans as director. Rev. W. F. White was the pastor. There were 21 additions; value of the church property was \$1000.00; and the pastor's salary was \$185.00 a year.
- 1922: Sunday School was graded, with an enrollment of 116, with an average of 75. The total income and total expenses were \$239.30.

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58 Years as New Hope Baptist Church

“The Industrial Revolution or Steel Age”
“Prohibition Nationally” “Depression Years”

- 1930-1938 Rev. L. R. Sides was the first pastor to live on the ‘field’, yet part-time. Sunday services were held twice a month, with prayer meeting being held when attendance permitted. Cemetery lots were raised in price from \$2.50 to \$3.00. A real concern for membership was evident. A resolution was adopted that ‘any church member that did not attend services at least once in a period of three months, without reasonable excuse, shall be placed on a list of inactive members and if that person asked for a letter of dismissal, they must be reinstated in this church before a full letter of commendation can be granted. The preacher would notify all members that lived away.’” The community takes the name of Hillview, but the church votes to remain ‘New Hope’. The church was wall-papered for \$15.00. A member loaned the amount; however, the money was not forthcoming, so the bill was paid out of cemetery funds. Woman’s Missionary Union was organized with Billie Robbins as president. Singing schools and singings were held every Thursday night. The second Sunday in May was Decoration Day, complete with all day singing and dinner on the ground. Cemetery funds were used to pay for surveying the church property in order to clear the deeds. However, they were not cleared until 1952, and only if a clause was inserted stating not to extend the cemetery. A building fund of \$397.50 was raised and reconstruction on the church began in 1937. Time and wood shutters had ravaged the inner structure. The church was torn down to the floor joists and rebuilt on the same foundation, complete with glass windows. The men of the church did the labor. Due to the fact that Rev. L. R. Sides died November 3, 1938, a memorial service was held instead of a dedication. The Women’s Missionary Union raised \$22.68 to build cement steps at the entrance. A bell and belfry was installed. Donations were taken, but not enough money was raised, so it was paid for with cemetery funds.
- 1939: Four Baptist Training Union Departments are formed: Baptist Adult Union, Baptist Young People’s Union, Intermediates and Juniors. There was \$250.00 borrowed to excavate and complete some basement classrooms. The men of the church did the work, and the women helped in many ways.
- 1939: World War I begins. New Hope honors their servicemen with a Honor Roll Board.
- 1941: Rev. A. T. Brown became a part-time pastor, while working at Public Works. Our membership was 177, with 24 additions. We had full Sunday services, with prayer meeting every week. Three families received the state paper. Bibles were used as textbooks in Sunday School. Vacation Bible School was held, with an enrollment of 25-with 25 present. Ten dollars was spent on flowers for illness and funerals of church members; five dollars for non-members. Water was piped into the church at a cost of \$250.00.

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- 1942: Rev. A. T. Brown was voted on to stay as pastor for an indefinite time. We began the envelope system of giving. Sunbeams were organized, with Emma Tolbert and Mattie Downey as Directors. A Sunday School teacher asked for the church's permission to use Baptist literature for Sunday School. This was granted and by the end of the year, Baptist Training Union literature was also used. The church sponsored a mission in North Birmingham as an extension of the church with our pastor.
- 1943: A Pastor's Study and office was partitioned off in the one room church.
- 1945: Rev. A. T. Brown was called as full-time pastor and quits his public job. Salary was \$235.00 a year. Membership was 141, with a Sunday School enrollment of 144. Total income was \$3,606.00.
- 1946: A church member denied the Baptist faith and the church acted on this. New Hope sponsored a 'Religious Hour' on Radio Station WKAX and had their own singing group called "The Melody Girls". A choir loft, raised rostrum and baptistry was completed.
- 1949: Restrooms were voted down in favor of completing Sunday School rooms in the excavated area, along with a new central furnace.

37 Years as Hillview Baptist Church

- 1951: Rev. C. L. Stover was called as pastor. A new pastorium was built, located in what is now the east parking lot, at a cost of \$2,000.00. The congregation furnished the labor, and all monies collected on the first Sunday of each month was paid on the mortgage. There were 29 tithers. The new pastorium was dedicated on June 21, 1953. The church heating system was converted from coal to gas.
- 1953: The church gives 10% of its income to the Cooperative Program for the first time, with 100 tithers that year. The church auditorium was remodeled at a cost of \$2,900.00, with new pews and stained glass windows. The floors were sanded for the first time. Everyone worked with a sweet spirit, even though there were dissenting votes cast in favor of Sunday School space. It was required to have ten signatures on the loan papers. As they were unable to get ten church members to sign, ten community members signed.

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37 Years as Hillview Baptist Church

- 1955-
1958: Rev. John A. Hogan was called as pastor. The new sanctuary was erected in 1957. The basement was built first and used for educational space. Later, the sanctuary was added, complete with balcony and baptistery, and the old building was used for Sunday School. The pews were donated by members, with memorial name plates attached. The first Brotherhood president was Lecil DeVine. The total income was \$24,943. The church property was valued at \$112,000. Membership was 563, with 56 additions. The membership of the Woman's Missionary Society was 129, Sunday School was 654, and Training Union was 228. There was 11% of the income contributed to the Cooperative Program.
- 1960-
1965: Rev. Charles Carter was called as pastor. Hillview was his first full-time pastorate after graduation from Seminary. The Adult Department was divided into two departments, along with Training Union. We contributed 16% to the Cooperative Program, which was the highest in the Church's History, but had to have many pledge catch-up days to maintain it. The first Church Hostess was Mattie Downey, who coordinated all church social events which included serving Vacation Bible School refreshments and Wednesday Night Suppers. The cost for the Wednesday Supper was fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children. The Historical Commission was formed and composed of the following: Mattie Downey, Irene Robinson, Laura Lee Carnes and Myrtis Sanford. The first new Allen Organ was purchased at a cost of \$3,548.00. The area in front of the church was paved. Our first Nursery Coordinator was Emma Jean Putman, an elected position, not salaried. We began to pay nursery workers. Gil Lowery was called as full-time Minister of Music and Education, who instituted the first printed Calendar of Activities.
- 1962: The church purchased a house at 1504 Mohican Drive at a cost of \$25,000. This home was purchased for the use of the Minister of Music. The old church building was torn down.
- 1963: The church engaged in a bond program for a new Educational Building, at a cost of \$150,000. This was launched and completed in six days. The unit was dedicated on September 22, 1963, which included a modern Nursery, Primary and Beginner Departments, Church Office and Library. Sally Templin was the Librarian and continues today. Linda Rice also served in this capacity, along with many other capable workers that assisted the librarian. Locks were installed on all outside doors of the buildings, which made it the first time the church was properly secured. The church purchased a lot for the future pastorium in Holiday Hills (subdivision). The old pastorium is moved to Home Gardens, redecorated and sold for \$5,735.00. The church held a Blood Donor Program.
- 1965: The Evangelistic Mission Trip went to Great Falls Baptist Church in Great Falls, Montana. Rev. Charles Carter and five deacons participated. It was considered very successful.

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- 1966-1969: Rev. Donald Atkinson was called as pastor. The church gave him permission to serve as an Air National Guard Chaplain. The Deacons recommended that the church refrain from sending flowers to sick and deceased members, a practice held since 1941. A Cemetery Committee was appointed and composed of the following: Ed Massey, R. E. Sanford and Oren Robbins, with a separate account of \$700.00. All receipts and debts were handled by the committee and reported at church business meeting. The Organist and Pianist positions became salaried. A kindergarten is begun with a donation of \$300.00 from the church. Forty children enrolled. It was a non-profit and self-sustaining organization. The kindergarten had many capable teachers and directors. Cemetery lots increased from a charge of \$25.00 to \$35.00. A sign was to be erected in front of this cemetery stating, "Anyone desiring lots in this cemetery, apply within." A fire broke out in the pastorium and did \$10,726.68 worth of damage to house and contents. The church built a new pastorium at 1441 Miami Drive in Holiday Hills (subdivision) for \$24,500.00.
- 1969-1971: Rev. E. L. Richardson was called as pastor. The church reviewed all church literature. A letter was sent to President Nixon, voicing an objection to the appointment of a representative to the Vatican. The church recorded a record amount of additions - 120 by baptism and 11 by letter, one called to preach and two to missions. A ramp was proposed to aid handicapped persons, who are unable to climb stairs.
- 1971-1973: Rev. Ray Woods was called as Interim and later as Pastor. The church restored the Family Wednesday Night Suppers. A donation of \$100.00 was given for the 78 West Revival Tent Meeting. A new bus was purchased at a cost of \$4,800. The January, February and March Training Union Quarterly for Junior and Senior High was recalled as unacceptable. A love offering of \$200.00 was sent to the hurricane victims on the Gulf Coast. Kindergarten was terminated, and donated \$100.00 to the Church Library. An Address Directory was made. The Church Offices moved across the hall from the existing ones. A Personnel Committee was formed. A Fifty Dollar donation was given to the Jaycee's to distribute literature on drugs.
- 1973-1977: Rev. Stanley Barnett was called as pastor. The Prime Timers were organized, a ministry to extend the work of the church through fellowship, prayer and love. Barbara Bencko was their Director. Mattie Downey was elected Church Hostess again, as there had been no hostess since 1965. The church opposed Zippy Mart for acquiring a license to sell beer. The Youth went on a Mission Trip. A parking lot fund was started. There were 252 additions to the church. The Puppet Ministry was started. A sound system was installed in the nursery. Youth Revival was held. The Auditorium and Choir Suite was redecorated at a cost of \$54,247.

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by
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(1918-2004)

37 Years as Hillview Baptist Church

- 1977-1985: Dr. Charles Christmas was called as Pastor. The Annual Brotherhood Cookout, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hullett, became a tradition. Summer Children and Youth programs were supplemented by the church. The enlarged, improved and paved parking lot was dedicated. The church purchased a Grand Piano at a cost of \$5,410. The Downstairs Music Office and Choir Suite was redecorated at a cost of \$6,500, and a new piano was purchased for \$1,795. The Youth went on a Summer Mission Trip. A Family Ministry Seminar was held, and as a result, the Deacon Family Care Program was instituted. Relief was sent to the hurricane victims. The Prime Timer's Kitchen Band was created in 1978. The church held a blood drive for the Red Cross. Master Life classes began with an enrollment of 57. The 'Singles Again' class was instituted. A Pastor's Class (now called the Auditorium Class) was created with an enrollment of 136. This class is for people that are not enrolled in any existing classes. A love offering was given to Joyce Carter, a Southern Baptist Missionary, to spend six weeks in Africa. In 1980, the church purchased a new Dodge Van at a cost of \$12,330.89. The Prayer Garden was created by the Prime Timers in 1981. The church donated \$250.00 to this project.
- 1985- Dr. Terry L. Sutton was called as Pastor. Two Sunday Morning Worship Services were instituted. A new bus was purchased at a cost of \$41,157.25. Hillview held the tenth Community Thanksgiving Service, first time since 1964. The offering received at this service was given to the Paramedic Unit of Hillview Fire Department. Mrs. Evelyn Lackey resigned as Financial Secretary and was honored for her 14 years of service. Mrs. Ozeda Wilkinson resigned as Nursery Coordinator and was honored for her 20 years of service. E. R. Tolbert was honored for his 30 years as Sunday School Director. The Historical Committee was reinstated. The fourth Pictorial Directory was made. The house, located at 1504 Mohican Drive, was sold for \$65,446.00. A Personal Computer was purchased for Church Office use. A Nursing Home and Fire Department Ministry was established. The church installed a security system. A Public Address System was purchased for the sanctuary. The house, located at 820 East Heflin Avenue was purchased, and Home Missionary, Othoniel Valdes and family, now reside. The Gethsemane Prayer Chapel was created by our Church Members, recognizing the need for prayer. A Reception Room and a Conference Room were created. The church voted to enter into a contract with Baptist Medical Centers to provide a professional Pastoral Counseling Ministry out of our church. A Mission Vacation Bible School was held at East Thomas Baptist Church. During a time of Denominational Controversy, Dr. Herschel Hobbs led our church in a Doctrinal Study.

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Present Day Hillview Baptist Church

Hillview Baptist Church is located at 800 East Heflin Avenue, seven miles from downtown Birmingham in west Jefferson County. It has been in existence since 1893, and has only occupied two sanctuaries. It is in good standing with the Birmingham Baptist Association.

The building it now occupies is a beautiful brick structure. It has a seating capacity of 550, including the balcony. The basement houses the Music Office, Choir Suite and additional educational space. This sanctuary was built in 1957. The church's physical plant includes an Educational Unit that houses the Church Offices, Nursery and Children's Departments, the Library and Sunday School space. The Educational Building was built in 1963. The third building is the Christian Life Center, built in 1969, and maintains a gym, kitchen and more Sunday School space.

Hillview Baptist Church is debt-free and has been for six years. The church contributes 12% of income to the Cooperative Program. The church property is valued at \$881,487. The church membership currently stands at 1300.

The pastor is Dr. Terry L. Sutton, a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Reformed Seminary, called in September of 1985 with his wife, Kathryn (Kay) and a son and daughter. They reside in the parsonage at 1441 Miami Drive in Holiday Hills (subdivision).

Dr. Sutton's enthusiasm and optimism is contagious. He is interested in every member and agent of the church. His zeal for lost souls is unsurpassed.

Hillview Baptist Church stepped out in faith by calling two full-time ministers. Our full-time Minister of Education and Activities is Dr. Donald N. Hazard, a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Luther Rice Seminary. Bro. Don was called in September of 1986, with his wife, Barbara. The Hazards have two married daughters.

Our full-time Minister of Music and Youth is Rev. Scott Finley, a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Bro. Scott was called in December of 1986, with his wife, Frieda and their two sons. Other Staff Personnel include Mrs. Jane Grace as our Church Pianist and Mrs. Barbara Hazard as our Church Organist. The church employs three secretaries: Mrs. Jo Ann Johnson, Church/Pastor's Secretary, Mrs. Monica McCullar, Financial/Education Secretary, and Mrs. Janice McDonald, Music/Youth Secretary. Mrs. Lucy Herring is our Nursery Coordinator. Our custodian is Mr. Don Hudson.

Mr. E. R. Tolbert is our Sunday School Director and Mrs. Alice Faye Couch is our Church Training Director. Mr. Al Smith is the Brotherhood Director.

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Our Pastors

“Remembering without ceasing, your work of faith, and labour of love...”
1 Thessalonians 1:3

1893	-	G. W. Reed
1894 - 1895	-	W. D. Shaw
1896	-	S. L. Waldrop (again 1912)
1897	-	J. S. Jernigan (again 1911)
1898	-	J. H. Pool
1899 - 1904	-	R. F. Shank (again 1924 - 1925)
1905 - 1907	-	J. F. Parker (again 1918 - 1919)
1908	-	H. S. Curtis
1913	-	C. T. Long
1914	-	R. T. Wooten
1920 - 1923	-	W. F. White
1930 - 1938	-	L. R. Sides
1939	-	Earl Cox
1941 - 1952	-	A. T. Brown
(1945)	-	A. T. Brown (first full-time pastor)
1952 - 1955	-	C. L. Stover
1955 - 1958	-	John Hogan
1960 - 1965	-	Charles Carter
1966 - 1969	-	Don Atkinson
1969 - 1971	-	E. L. Richardson
1971 - 1973	-	Ray Woods
1973 - 1977	-	Stanley Barnett
1977 - 1985	-	Charles Christmas
1985	-	Terry Sutton

The total is 23, however, the years that are missing is due to poor records.

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Ministerial Staff Members

".....My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." Psalm 63:5

Gilliam Lowery	Ira Creasman
Doug Olive	Donnie Arrant
John McGukin	Jim McMurtree
James McFarland	Bill Cole
Robert Meyer	Donna McMurtrie
Truett Chambers	Leonard Robertson
Don McCrary	Denise Yessick
Matthew Nail	Harold Hancock
J. Donny Lee	Scott Finley

Don Hazard

Accompanist Staff Members

"Make a joyful noise." Psalm 98:6

Vera Donaldson	Dolly Nichols
Jane Grace	Eolin Jones Snyder
Jana Hooie	Helen Sides
Margery Peeples	Jackie Tyler
Chris Fowler	
Mrs. Ed Lewis	
Joy Sanders	
Janet Deason	
Barbara Hazard	

There have been many non-salaried, volunteer workers who have made significant contributions to our church. Our church will be forever indebted to them.

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Secretarial Staff Members

Gladys Hinkle
Edith Payne
Juanice Parrish
Reita Entrekin
Joyce Gaskin
Sylvia McCary
Janice Deason
Jane Grace

Mary Harrelson
Jo Ann Johnson
Evelyn Lackey
Mary Hughes
Monica McCullar
Carolyn Linderman
Barbara Bencko
Janice McDonald

Custodial Staff Members

Edward Massey
Edith Massey
Oran Robbins
Patricia Downey
Ray Cochran
Naomi Massey

Matt Nail
Regina Callicott
Mildred Howell
Carmon McGowan
Jimmy Chambers
Don Hudson

There have been many non-salaried, volunteer workers who have made significant contributions to our church. Our church will be forever indebted to them.

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Men Ordained or Licensed for Ministry by Hillview Baptist Church

“.....I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.” II Timothy 1:3

Donnie Arrant

J. W. Brown

Ira Creasman

Bill Gober - Native Son

Keith Gober

Harold Hancock

Walter Johnsey

William Lee

Don McCrary

Jim McFarland

John McGukin

Charles Mullinax

Jim McMurtrie

Matthew Nail - Native Son of a Native Son

Doug Olive

Paul Sublett

Mike Sullivan - Native Son

Jack Woods

Barton Woodfin

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Past Presidents or Directors

“But we will give ourselves continually in prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:4

Woman’s Missionary Society - 1938

Billie Robbins - first	Barbara Tittle
Jennie Morris	Margaret Welch
Mrs. L. R. Sides	Mary Harrelson
Maude Jones	Mrs. George Lavender
Mildred Howell	Etoile Teer
Helen DeVine	Tressie Painter
Mrs. John Hogan	Ruth Morgan
Ruby Kipp	Cathy Crawford
Evelyn Lackey	

Brotherhood - 1955

Lecil DeVine - first	O. L. Kemp
E. D. Clouse	Andrew Micklow
J. P. Christian	Charles Lewis
Al Smith	

Sunday School Superintendents

W. N. Penney	B. F. Payne
Marvin Eason	C. L. Hall
J. C. Ridgeway	D. C. Howell
A. J. Bonds	Charles Mann
Rupert DeVine	E. R. Tolbert

Training Union Directors

Millard Evans	Allen Carroll
Louise Bonds	Mary Ridgeway
Lillie Downey	G. E. Templin
C. N. Adams	R. E. Claborn
James Horn	W. A. Morse
Leo James	Mrs. J. T. Parker
Mrs. C. W. Bonds	Mrs. E. L. Hall
Rupert DeVine	William Maudlin
Charles Cantrell	Sam Sartain
Alice Faye Couch	

These records are as complete as records allow. Anyone’s name missing from any of these lists was purely an oversight, and not intentional.

History of Hillview Baptist Church (1893-1988)

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Statistical Reflections

“Who doeth great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without numbers.” Job 4:9

Membership	1983	1383
*Smallest	1899 & 1921	22
Number Baptized	1974	47
Most tithers	1987	390
Highest % to Cooperative Program	1962	17%
Sunday School Enrollment	1971	1094
Highest Sunday School Attendance	1971	702
Church Training Enrollment	1970	375
Highest Church Training Attendance	1970	216
Vacation Bible School Enrollment	1970	378
100% VBS Enrollment & Attendance	1941	25
Brotherhood Enrollment	1983	200
Fully Graded Choir Enrollment	1972	295
Choir Attendance	1972	232

*1899 - Spanish-American War aftermath

1921 - World War I aftermath

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Financial Reflections

“An the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise steward who his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give him his portion of food in due season.” Luke 12:42

Highest Receipts	1987	\$392,492
Lowest Receipts	1905	\$4.83
Highest Budget Expenitures	1985	\$341,614
Lowest Expenditures (recorded)	1884	\$4.83
Highest Indebtedness	1969	\$285,000
Longest period debt-free	1981 - present	6 years
Highest Staff Salaries	1985	\$107,979
Lowest Staff Salaries (recorded)	1893	\$50.00
Highest Number of Tithers	1987	390
Lowest Number of Tithers		2
Highest Value of Church Property	1981	\$960,000
Lowest Value of Church Property	1902	\$500
Highest Value of Pastorium		\$163,781
Lowest Value of Pastorium		\$5,700

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Prologue

“...I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” John 17:4

Research has been fascinating. I have been engaged in this research since 1950, and the whole story has yet to be told. I have been in touch with bits and pieces of a church and community's past. It has sensitized me to feelings, trends, mistakes and achievements.

My primary sources were the limited church minutes, newspaper clippings, Samford University, the North Alabama Baptist Association, denominational history and The Alabama Baptist.

My secondary source has been eye witness interpretation of the church's history. I began my work in 1950, picked it up again in 1960, and finished it in 1986. The pastors of Hillview Baptist Church encouraged me each time, and I am most grateful to our present pastor, Dr. Terry Sutton, for asking me to finish.

I thank you as a church for the privilege at peeking behind the scenes at the “making of our church”. I have approached all of it with openness. Had I not been flexible, I might have missed key ideas.

I have treated my sources with integrity and tried very hard to record facts and quotations accurately. I was a part of this history for 55 years, but I have not expressed my opinion on these pages. Sometimes, the records forgot, I remembered, but did not use my remembrance for fear it might be biased. Sometimes, I forgot and the records refreshed my mind.

The information was so scanty that it was necessary to place it in a state or national setting to visualize the mood and trend of the era. The cultural, economic, religious and social life cannot be separated if one is to understand the happening. My prayer is that this treatise can live for you as it has for me.

Mattie Downey

May 1986