

## **HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE OFFICE OF ELDERS IN THE EARLY LIFE OF CLAYTON BAPTIST CHURCH**

---

***PLURALITY OF ELDERS***—Clayton Baptist Church had more than one elder (i.e. pastor, shepherd) at a time. They were called elders.

- “Clayton Baptist Church was organized as Stekoah United Baptist Church on Saturday, August 14, 1819.”
- The Constitution Presbytery: “Three ministers formed the constituting presbytery for the church: David Qualls, Joseph Byers, and Humphrey Posey.”
- “By far the longest pastorate at this church was John Coffee’s from May 1845 to at least 1884.” NOTE: There is a gravestone engraved “Elder John Coffee” in the cemetery.
- March 15 1890. “The Stecoah Church\_\_\_\_\_ Received a request from Pleasant Hill Church for the eldership of our church to be with them on Saturday before the 1st Sunday in April next. Brother TCN McConnell, MC Swafford, and J. H. Coffee were appointed to go to Pleasant Hill Church.” J. C. N. McConnell clerk, RS Sanders Moderator.
- July the 19<sup>th</sup> 1890—“a petition from Liberty Church asking for the Eldership of our church to be with them on Friday before the second Sabbath in September next and their request was granted.” “On motion the moderator appointed the delegates to Rabun Co. Union meeting.”
- October 15, 1892—“A Presbytery was formed and J. S. Dickson was appointed and TCN McConnell clerk of the Presbytery. J. H. Coffee was presented for ordination of Deacon.”
- June 15, 1895—“The Stecoah Church having set apart Brother W. R. Coffee as Deacon the presbytery was composed of Rev. J. A. Bartlett and R. S. Sanders with Deacons W. R. Whitmire, J. H. Coffee, and (others.). R. S. Sanders was elected chairman.”
- August the 4<sup>th</sup> 1898—“Brother W. S. Whitmire was ordained August 12<sup>th</sup> 1898 being previously set apart by the church, the ordaining council was composed of the following Elder G. S. Bartlet, Chairman, R. S. Sanders, Secretary J. S. Dickson, R. L. Whitmire.

***CHURCH DISCIPLINE DUTIES***—This responsibility was overseen by the elders.

- Saturday, May 15, 1897 “...On motion set apart W. S. Whitmire for ordination to the ministry and to call a meeting Saturday before the fifth Sunday in this month...to call a presbytery for the same.”

***THE ELDERS ASSISTED IN OVERSIGHT OF THE CHURCH***—change of name, ordination or deacons.

- August 18, 1906 “a motion was made and carried to call a presbytery to ordain Brother J. T. Earl as a deacon which resulted in the calling of Rev. J. S. Jester, Rev. C. L. Ledford, and Rev. A. A. Williamson.

*NOTE: at this meeting a motion was made and carried to change the name of our church from Stecoah Baptist Church in Clayton to The Clayton Baptist Church.*

- September 7, 1913 “Clayton Baptist church met in conference after preaching services by Rev. W. H. Dodd proceeded to ordain as deacon the following brethren: C. A. Rafter, E. M. Camp, and James Moore. The Presbytery consisted of Rev. W. H. Dodd, Rev. J. T. Kendall and Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ assisted by the Deacons of the church as follows: J. F. Smith, J. H. Coffee and J. T. Davis.”
- September 3, 1916 “Ordered that an ordination service be appointed in accordance to a request from Pleasant Hill Baptist church to consider ordaining E. M. Canup to the ministry. The time was set for 2:30 o’clock on third Sunday in September. It was left to the pastor and deacons to select a presbytery.
- September 17<sup>th</sup> 1916 “Clayton Baptist Church met according to the appointment for the purpose of examining Brother E. M. Canup preparatory to ordination to the ministry. A presbyter was composed of the following ordained ministers, Rev Chase T. Brown, Rev. J. T. Swanson, Rev. Austin Crunkleton and Rev. S. J. Burrell and the following deacons; J. F. Smith, B. H. Brown and Joseph T. Davis which Presbytery was organized by electing Rev. Charles T. Brown mod and Joseph T. Davis clerk. Brother Canup was presented to the Presbytery by Joseph T. Davis when Rev. Charles T, Brown propounded from the scriptures appropriate and necessary questions which questions were answered intelligently by Brother Canup. The Presbytery retired to consider the answers given on examination and passed favorably on the examination (NOTE: He made it!)... The laying on of hands was by members of the Presbytery who are ordained ministers...”
- Sunday night May 20 1917 “Clayton Baptist Church met pursuant to adjournment for the purpose of ordaining the four deacons previously elected. The following Presbytery was formed to witness (6 Reverends and the following deacons of Clayton and Blue Heights Baptist churches, to witness (4 deacons)...”

***From: Historical Sketch of the Clayton Baptist Church constituted 1819 and compiled for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in August 1969 by Rev. Malcolm Chapman. Many thanks to Helen Hunter who assisted in the compilation of this historical sketch.***