

# The Baptists

## ~ Chronology, before 1900 ~

- 1639 Roger William, a Separatist, established a Baptist Church at Providence, Rhode Island. At about the same time, John Clarke established a Baptist Church at Newport, Rhode Island. These were Particular or Calvinist Baptist churches.
- 1671 The Seventh Day Baptist Church was first organized as a separate body in North America in 1671 under Stephen Mumford.
- 1727 Paul Palmer organized the FreeWill Baptists in the South.
- 1773/6 The first black Baptist churches were organized at Silver Bluff, near Augusta, Georgia, and at Petersburg, Virginia.
- 1787 Benjamin Randall organized the Free Will Baptists in the North.
- 1814 Baptists met in Philadelphia and organized the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the U.S.A. for Foreign Missions. It became known as the Triennial Convention.
- 1827 In North Carolina, the Kehukee Association of Primitive Baptists was formed. They became known also as Old School Baptists, Regular Baptists, Antimission and Hard-Shell Baptists.
- 1845 The Baptist Church divided over the issue of slavery. This led to the formation of the American (Northern) Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.
- 1852 Swedish immigrants under the leadership of Gustaf Palmquist started the Baptist General Conference.

In 1719, German Baptist Brethren (Dunkers) settled at Germantown, Philadelphia, PA. The Seventh-Day Baptists established a settlement in Lancaster County, PA. Communities of Baptists from Virginia moved into North Carolina, from about 1740; they were originally from New England. As a result of Regulator trouble in the vicinity of Alamance County, NC, many Baptist settlers left there, beginning about 1768, and went to South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Today, 27 different groups of Baptists make up the largest Protestant family in the United States.

## ~ Records, Resources ~

Baptist churches are self-governing, grouping themselves into local and state associations, with national connections. Most Baptist church records will be kept at the local level. When a church seeks to exist, it may send its records to a central archive. Few records have been published.

Baptist churches do not ordinarily record marriages; nor do they record births. Only rarely is the age of a person given at the time of his or her baptism, although it is commonly understood that Baptists do not practice infant baptism.

Membership lists are usually available and can prove helpful in genealogical research. Look for admissions and dismissals of members. Church minutes may provide additional information of interest to genealogists.

An obituary may make reference to a particular church or cemetery. A local group may have indexed a cemetery associated with a particular church.

County and state historical societies and genealogical groups may have published volumes or loose papers for you to examine for church records. Regional histories will give an account of the churches present in their communities. Names of early members are usually mentioned.

Check the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* to see if church records of your area of interest have been published or microfilmed.

The major Baptist groups have libraries and archives with holdings pertaining to the church in a general manner. They will usually have records pertaining to their ministers, annual reports, congregation minutes, etc.

## ~ Bibliography ~

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