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#### Perry Baptist Church

It is of interest to us to know that among the first groups to settle at Perry, many were Baptist. William Hancock, the leader of the first group of settlers, was a staunch Baptist. The McClain family which followed the next year, was also Baptist, and was destined to play a great part in establishing the work of Christ, not only in Perry, but in surrounding communities. The settlement -- that is the first white settlers -- came in 1852 under the leadership of William Hancock. The first of March, 1855, the first Baptist church, and the first church organized, was organized. Then, late in fall of the same year, the first church building was erected.

During the autumn of the year of 1854, Elder S.G. O'Brian, pastor of the Baptist church at Waco, preached the first Baptist sermon in Perry. It no doubt was preached in the home of Daniel McClain. About five months later, in March 1855, Elder S.G. O'Brian returned, preached again in the home of Daniel McClain, and acted as moderator in the organization of the church. The following are a few of the charter members of this church: Isaac McClain, E.W. McClain, Susan McClain, and Josephine McClain. Brother Isaac McClain was recognized as the first deacon and Brother E.W. McClain was elected the first church clerk.

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In the McClain family which came from Perry, Illinois and settled here was a fine young man by the name of John. John was born November 26, 1826 in Knox County, Tennessee. Very soon after his birth his parents moved to Illinois, where at the age of twenty-six, he became a Christian and joined the Baptist church at Perry. The Lord had not only saved the soul of young McClain, but had laid His hand upon his life as a minister of the Gospel. Before starting on a long journey to Texas, the church there licensed John to preach. He was not ordained until August 9, 1857 at Owl Creek, near Gatesville, upon the request of the Perry church. He was present at the organization of the Perry church, and was one of its charter members.

In 1857, Elder S. G. O'Brian resigned the pastorate at Perry, and the church began looking about for a worthy successor. The pulpit committee did not have to look far nor long in order to find someone who could take up the work and carry on. Even though the prophet of old, and Jesus later on said - "a prophet is without honor in his own country", here was a young man who held the respect and confidence of his own people enough that he was elected pastor of his own home church. So it was that Elder John McClain served lengthy pastorates of the Perry church, and for several years served as Missionary for the Leon River Baptist Association. Churches in Coryell, Bell, Williamson, and Milam counties also shared in the usefulness of this great man of God.

"Uncle John McClain," for he was known by that name, in his later years lived at Eagle Springs just over the line in Coryell County, Texas. Here he lived,

where he could view his former fields of service, among an endless number of friends and relatives. Twenty-six years ago on June 18, he quietly passed over the Jordan to be with the Father, and friend, and loved ones.&hellip;

One of the great meetings held in the history of the church occurred soon after Elder McClain became pastor. Elder W.B. Eaves, one of the ministers who sat on the presbytery which ordained Elder McClain, assisted the pastor in the meeting. There were about fifty additions to the church, thirty-seven being by Baptists. This is the first revival we have any record of being held in the church. We are suer, however, that some good ones were held under the leadership of Pastor O'Brian.