

They and their families were in attendance at every meeting. All the people of Coryell community were good people and many were Christians and members of Coryell Church. There was very little wickedness among the whole countryside. Members of this church or not, they usually attended Coryell. They were the Burlesons, Halls, Boyds, Striblins, Caldwells, Olivers, Fosters, Hickersons, Edwards, Graves, Merritts, Gibsons, Davis, McIlhaney, Morris, Powells, Collards, Roes, Jordans, Kerbys, Comptons, Harrisons, Christians, Smiths, Bennetts, Stricklands, Andersons, Sheffields, Gunnins, Bernards, Crains, Gilcreases, Daniels, Jones, Crouches, and many others who did just as much and were held in as high esteem, but whose names do not come to me right now. They were good people and built Coryell well.

Coryell was the mother church of Bluff Creek (now Osage), Rainey's Creek, Oglesby, and Tonk Creek, for a large number of their charter members were former members of Coryell, bearing their church letters with them. Two of these churches have disbanded, but Oglesby and Osage are still serving their communities and the Lord.

Leon River Baptist Association was organized in 1858. Z. N. Morrell tells us in his book, "Flowers and Fruits", "The year 1858 was one of

harmonious activity and progress among our people. Five new associations sprang into existence.

"I was present and took part in one of these organizations -- Leon River Association. Great destitution had prevailed in the counties of Bell, Williamson, and Coryell, until the voices of Elders John Clabaugh and John McClain declared the way of salvation to the people. Both of these were earnest men and men of God. They were well adapted to such a field, and the people heard them gladly. Possessed largely of the spirit of Christ, they were willing to work and their labor was of that effective kind which moves and induces the multitude to feel that Jesus of Nazereth passes by."

The first messengers to the Leon River Baptist Association from Coryell Church were Brethren James McIlhaney, J. Hicks, and A. D. Meroney. They met at Nolan Creek, in Bell County, September 24, 1858. They were to assist in the organization of the Leon River Baptist Association which is Coryell County Association. Gatesville First and Coryell Church have been represented at every session of the Association since its foundation.

Coryell has produced many leaders who were not ministers but laymen, who have built the invisible church and have assumed responsibilities that have helped the church to make progress.

The minutes of the church proceedings are missing, and we do not know the exact order in which some of the early preachers come nor the years each served. Brother Clabaugh was the pastor elected in 1855. In 1869 Brother J. S. Holmes was pastor, and Brother A. D. Meroney was delegate to the association. Brother A. C. Graves was pastor through the years 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1878, and 1881; Brother J. M. Wright through the years of 1874, 1875, and 1880; Brother John McClain through the years of 1876, 1877, and 1878; Brother G. W. Clark was pastor in 1884; and Brother John Batemann was pastor in 1885.

Reverend John Holmes was born in North Carolina in 1823. He was ordained by a Baptist Church to preach the gospel and was pastor of several churches of the Leon River Baptist Association. He served both Gatesville and Coryell at different times, being pastor of Coryell in 1868 and 1869. In 1845 he was married to Miss Boonie White. She was sister to Mrs. Lovejoy, the grandmother of Knox Lovejoy. Reverend Holmes was a good man and worked diligently in his field, but he is of the number that we have little data on.

Reverend A. C. Graves was pastor at Coryell during the years 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1878, and 1881. He was born in Tennessee and married Miss Eveline Bennett of Tennessee.

J. M. Wright

Coryell