

Joe Combs



Old Church To Get Marker

Mrs. C. A. Beall of Milam, Tex., says she has succeeded in getting an official Texas historical marker for the New Hope-Bethel Baptist Church, located about four miles north of Milam and a quarter mile off Texas 87. The church is without a doubt the first Baptist church established in Texas. Missionary work was begun there early in the 1800s, and Elder William Cook started preaching there about 1818. Mrs. Beall writes as follows:

"Since it was you who spurred my renewed interest in acquiring a marker for the New Hope-Bethel Baptist Church, and the work is now completed, I think you will be pleased to have a copy of the paper that I wrote, which was accepted without question several months ago.

"The historical marker is scheduled to arrive in mid-December. Date for the dedication and erection of the marker has not been set. I will let you know when the date is decided. It is my desire that you make the dedicatory speech. Is that asking too much? If so I will understand. No program has been started.

"Mrs. Zeda Schultz of Hemphill is the county chairman of the society. I have just read your letter of February of this year, again. Thanks for the encouragement contained in it."

The official marker will be 27 by 42 inches. Because the church is one of the most interesting of the churches established in pioneer days, the dedication will no doubt attract wide attention. Church people of every faith should take part in the ceremonies.

East Texas now has two famous religious landmarks. McMahan Chapel has long been a center of interest, and New Hope-Bethel will soon join it as a tourist attraction.

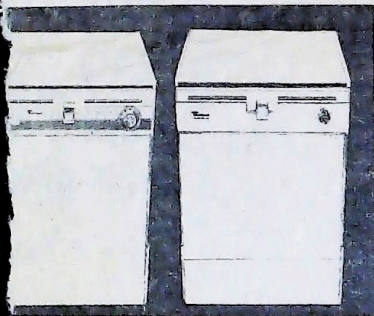
The church was founded as Bethel Baptist Church on Feb. 7, 1841. It was a congregation of The Pilgrim Church, of regular Baptist faith and order. A frame meeting house was built at that time.

Bethel joined with the Missionary Baptist Association in 1849. Its name was changed about 1870 to New Hope. The church became part of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1927, and W.T. Love has been pastor since 1937.

Watch for announcements of the dedication date and attend this important event. The congregation is now enjoying a brick church building with modern conveniences.

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