

York Baptists observing 96 years of church worship

By JOHN SMITH

This month the First Baptist Church of York will mark its 96th year. They will soon complete payment for a \$65,000 educational building.

It was in March of 1866 that Rev. T. R. Gaines preached his

first sermon to a meeting of Baptists in York. This first meeting was held in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian church building.

Mr. Gaines preached several more sermons in the ARP building and then used the county court house. Later the Methodist

church building was used until a building was secured for the newly formed Baptist congregation.

"Prior to the year 1857 very little was known in Yorkville in regard to the Baptist denomination," says a brief history of the York Baptist church.

In the year of 1857 a church of the Baptist denomination was organized four miles northwest of York and called Union Baptist. Yorkville had been settled for about 100 years at that time. There were well established Presbyterian churches, two of them, an Associate Reformed Presby-

terian church, Methodist church and Episcopal church in the town all housed in substantial, to elegant church buildings.

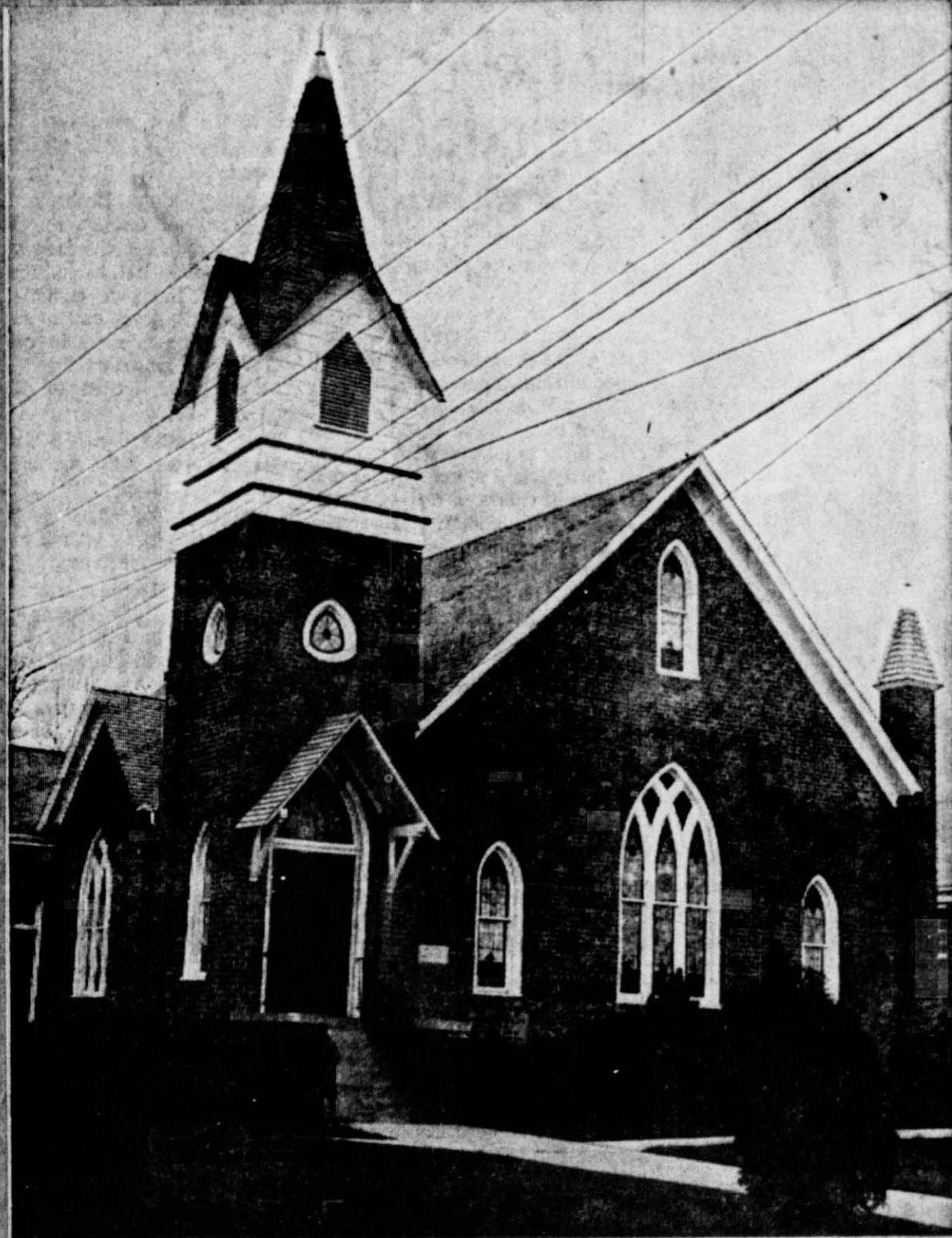
It was not until after the struggle of the Confederate States for independence that the Baptist congregation was established in the town. There had been "some preaching" in the town prior to this date.

In the year 1852 the Broad River Association was meeting at Antioch Baptist church, in the upper part of York County, and authorized Dr. William Curtis of Limestone Springs to labor as a mis-



Annex — The \$65,000 educational and fellowship building of the First Baptist Church in York will be paid off in June,

almost five years ahead of the 10-year loan schedule.



York's First Baptist — The First Baptist Church, on South Congress Street in York, will be 96 years old this month.

The church now has a budget of \$36,000 and a membership of 350.

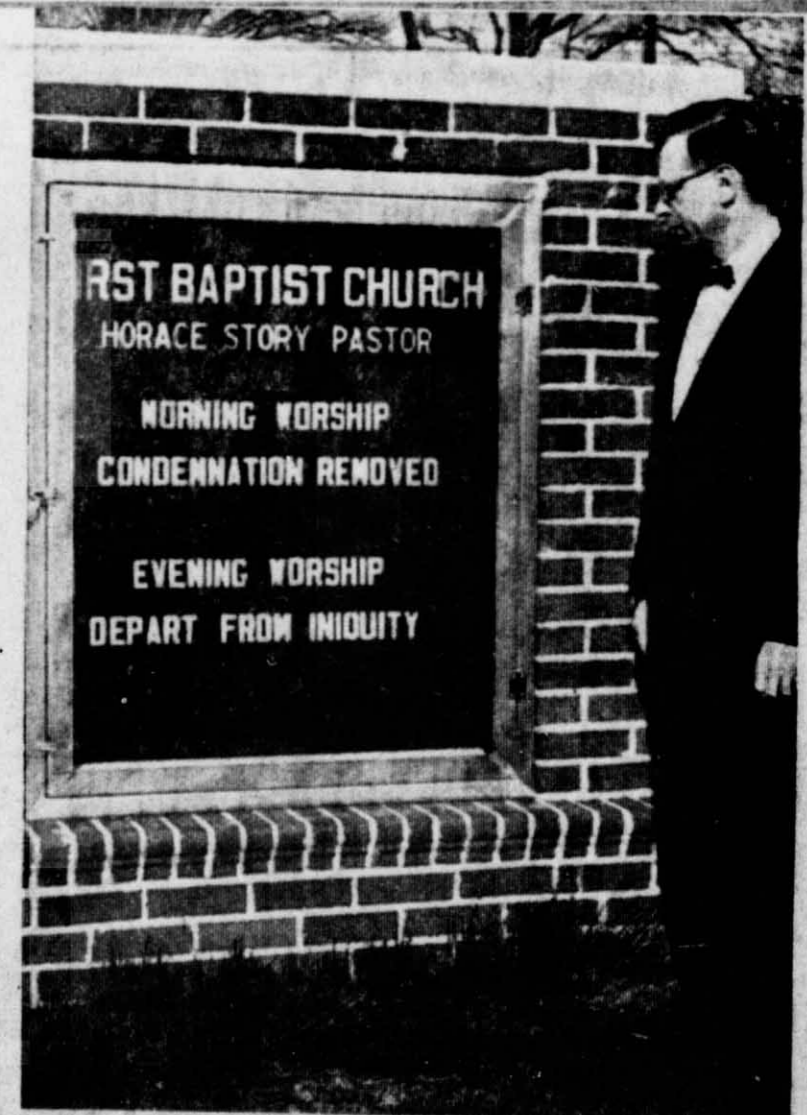
sionary in the town of Yorkville" during the year 1853.

The Rev. Tilman R. Gaines settled in Yorkville and established a Baptist newspaper, the "Baptist Messenger" about this same time. The paper was short lived, but he later established the "Working Christian" which is now the "Baptist Courier".

On the second Sunday of May, 1866, just a year after Gen. Robert E. Lee had surrendered, the announcement was made that a new Baptist church was to be organized in York. The Rev. J. C. Burge, minister of Union church made the announcement. The York church was organized with a total of 16 members.

Now 96 years later there are 350 members of the York church. The first building of the church in York was a store room near the Kings Mountain railway depot. It was given to the church by B. P. Boyd. The room was equipped with chairs and other furnishings for church use.

An interesting incident in the church history was the fund raising campaign for the first building constructed by the congregation. Mr. Gaines, the minister, received permission to visit Baptist conventions and meetings in other parts of the country and solicit funds. He first visited the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Memphis, Tenn. He asked the Convention for donations toward construction of a church



New sign — Rev. Horace Story, pastor, stands beside the new church sign at the First Baptist Church in York.

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building for his new congregation. He received \$45.00. He did the same thing in Chicago and was given \$500. He then visited Detroit, Toledo, Rochester, New York and other cities. Donations also came from Georgia, Virginia and North Carolina. A total of \$1,771.74 was donated to the church for its first building. Mr. Gaines then aided the church by assisting in the actual construction.

The York Baptist Association was organized in the York church in October, 1868. It was a combination of churches that had belonged to the Broad River and Mariah Associations.

The Rev. Horace Story, present pastor, is the eighteenth to supply this church.

The First Baptist Church in York has become a large and prosperous church. Its 350 members now have an annual budget of \$36,000. They will pay off indebtedness on the new two story brick educational and fellowship building in June. It could have been paid off before that time, but the church considerably raised its funds for missions.

The loan was for a ten year period. It will be paid off in June after five and a half years. The cost of the building is some \$65,000.

The present church building was dedicated in 1892. It cost \$4,000. The educational addition at the rear of the sanctuary was built between 1919 and 1923 at a cost of \$10,000.

The next addition to the Church plant will probably be a new pastorium. The present house was built in 1911 and stands at the back of the church property facing Cleveland street. The church faces on South Congress street.

A committee is presently studying the pastorium.

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