

## **BEGINNING FACTS OF THE WILDWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST**

The Lord's church at Wildwood had its beginning on the second Sunday of January, 1941. This was accomplished by brother Murray J. O'Berry, a minister from Tampa, Florida, and brother J. W. (Jake) Collier, of Wildwood, Florida. Those present for the first worship service were: Maggie Caruthers & daughter, Margaret, J. W. (Jake) & Blanche Collier, Fannie Futch, Edmond & Lovey Hamlet & Edith; Lillie & Mammy Liddle, and brother & sister Will Wallace, and daughters, Nettie (Wallace) Castlebury & Ruby (Wallace) Redding.

The first worship service was held in the Wildwood City Hall, in downtown Wildwood, Florida. Worship continued at this location until the building was built in 1945.

Some who began attending later on that same year were Irene Slaughter & family, Marie and Louanna Jane (Grandma) McCollum Slaughter (mother of Sam, Gilbert, Dayton, Emmett & Buster Slaughter who later attended here) and brother Abe Motes.

Tent meetings were held in the city of Wildwood located on the old "A. & P." property on north Main Street. One, in the fall of 1942, with brother Byron Conley, from south Florida, was very memorable to me as a child. He used a chalk board, and drew the most beautiful pictures with colored chalk each evening. I couldn't wait to get there nightly to see what he had drawn on his chalk board. I vividly remember a scene of the cross, with blood flowing from it... Also, I remember how stirring his messages could be, he would personally be moved to tears, as he told us the message of Jesus, and so were we. Those converted that fall included brother & sister E.S. Echols, David East, B. J. East, (brothers of Blanch Collier), Frank Slaughter & Beverly Collier. Irene Slaughter was re-baptized.

In 1943, Mack (W.M.) & Eunice Means were added the church in Wildwood. Also, Luther & Edna Futch moved here and also began worshipping with us.

In 1944, Dayton & Louise Slaughter & son, Dan, moved here. She was already a member, and soon Dan obeyed the gospel. H.O. (Buster) & Grace Slaughter began meeting with the group. Emmett & Evelyn Slaughter moved to Wildwood, and also began to worship there.

Another tent meeting was held in 1945, with brother Byron Conley, and this time, brothers Dayton, Emmett, & Gilbert Slaughter became members. Chester & Lois Strickland also were baptized and added to the church, along with others.

A lot for a building was purchased in 1943, and brother & sister Echols donated a lot adjoining it. Building material was purchased as money became available and was stacked on to the lot. Work finally began on the actual building in the summer of 1944, and the building was finished in 1945.

**The cost of this first building was \$4,390.06.**

*(—Virginia Slaughter Elliott)*





Wildwood is and was a railroad town. Almost everyone who settled here was either employed by the railroad, or fruit growers express. So all us older folks well remember the coal steam engines of the early years, before diesel locomotives made their entrance. Also, we remember well that every train had a caboose. This is an early scene from the old depot in downtown Wildwood...circa 1950's...



**FIRST FULL-TIME MINISTER  
1945-46**

L. B. CHASTAIN  
Speaker

Mr. Chastain taught high school classes the first year the School opened in 1945 while he was preaching for the Wildwood Church of Christ. He drove a bus of children to the Bible School each day. His wife, the former Daris Starling, worked as the school administrative secretary.

After one year Mr. Chastain and his family moved to Bell, Florida, for him to preach and pursue a bachelor's degree in elementary education at the University of Florida. In 1952 they moved back to Central Florida for him to teach 5th and 6th grades at [redacted] School.





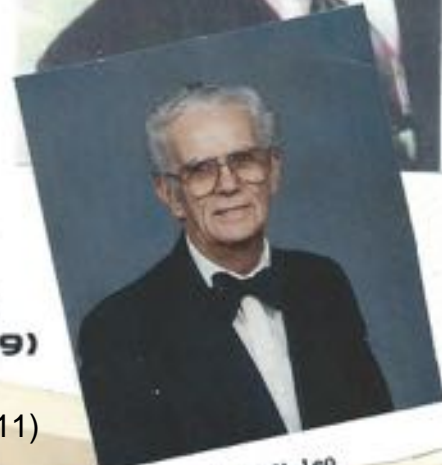


**KNOWN MINISTERS WHO HAVE  
MINISTERED HERE**



POLK, Lonnie & Martha

- ROY GODBOLT  
 LESTER STARLING  
 ALDEN NORTON  
 GEORGE HOOVER  
 WILLIE BRYSON  
 FLAVIS ROSE  
 BENNIE PICKREN  
 ARTHUR HASKINS  
 MURRAY J. D'BERRY (1941-45)  
 MORRIS NORMAN  
 GRADY FULMER  
 L.B. CHASTAIN (1945)  
 ORVEL H. BOYD (1946-56)  
 FOY CHERRY (1957-62)  
 KENNETH ADAMS (1962-65)  
 CHARLIE BODDY (1965-68)  
 SAM AYERS  
 VERNON MEANS  
 CLETUS STUTZMAN  
 LESTER PATE  
 BILL SWEETON (1972-74)  
 LEWIS MIKEL  
 BOB SALMON  
 FLOYD ROSS  
 H. LEO PATTON (1976-83)  
 JOE T. SPIVEY, SR.  
 LONNIE L. POLK (1983-94)  
 DAVID DOMINESSEY (1997-99)  
 EUGENE LINDSEY 1999  
 CHARLIE BODDY (1999-2011)



PATTON, Leo



Cletus Stutzman, past president of CH&BS, preached here often.



L. B. CHASTAIN



David Myers (2011-)