

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

Many dissenters from the old world came to New England and the early part of the seventeenth century and among them were Baptists. On account of Puritan persecution in Massachusetts many were attracted to New Jersey, induced by the liberal "bill of rights", by which "liberty of conscience to all religious sects who behaved well", was drawn up by the proprietors about 1664.

Piscataway Baptist Church was formed in 1689 and it is the next oldest Baptist Church in the state. The Baptists of New Brunswick were members there until 1812.

Hon James Parker of Perth Amboy, N. J. offered to deed a small lot, corner of George and Somerset Sts., in New Brunswick, then used as a family burying ground, to any religious body who would build a respectable church thereon, and in 1809 twenty or more persons living in New Brunswick who were Baptists, believed that this offer furnished the opportunity for which they were waiting. The plot of land seemed too small, for they saw the apparent need, not only of a house of worship, but a parsonage and a burying ground of their own. With this in view a subscription list was started to raise an amount sufficient to purchase the two adjoining lots and to erect a suitable house of worship. A meeting was called Sept. 6, 1809, at the home of Asa Runyon, corner of Neilson and Church Sts. Those present were Asa Runyon, John Bray, Abraham Potts, Squire Martin, George Clark, James Dunham, James Conklin. They raised three thousand dollars and began to build in the spring of 1810, and by degrees the work progressed, until in the fall of 1812 the building was completed at a cost of five thousand dollars. This church and the Piscataway church jointly called a pastor, Rev. James McLaughlin. He was to preach in the Piscataway church Sunday mornings and in New Brunswick in the afternoons. This arrangement continued until Sept. 1817. On Sept. 21, 1816, the members living in New Brunswick were, by the adoption of a series of articles of faith, and by entering into solemn covenant with each other, constituted a regular Gospel church. The following are the names of the first members:-