OWEN CHAPEL CHURCH OF CHRIST

Compiled by members of the Leadership Brentwood Class of 2008:

Renee Chevalier Randy Lee Todd Petrowski Amy Thomas Mike Womack

The information was compiled from the following sources:

- Granny White and Her Pumpkins, by T. Vance Little, @1993; pages 15 and 16.
- Historic Brentwood, by Vance Little, ©1985; page 103.
- Historical Markers of Williamson County, by Rick Warwick, @1999; page 26.

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Partition Separating Sexes Is Still in Place at Owen Chapel

As you drive back and forth along Franklin Road down toward Concord Road you pass a neat little brick building, a real architectural gem, that houses the Owen Chapel Church of Christ. One can hardly help being impressed by its trim lines and classical appearance. Perfectly balanced in its front facade are two doors. Did you ever wonder what they were there for? You can bet your booties that they are not there for architectural symmetry.

One door was for the women, and one door was for the men. And they sat on separate sides of the church. Owen Chapel's pews have a partition between them running right down the middle of the church. The practice of separating men and women during religious services was quite wide spread and by no means unique to the Church of Christ.

It is not clear how long the custom of separating the sexes at Owen Chapel continued. One of the first members to break the barrier was life long member Samuel Richardson. He lives next door to the church and is descended from a founding father, the proverbial "pillar of the church." He brought his bride Gladys to the church in 1933. It "raised some eyebrows" when they sat "on the same side of the partition."

Louise Williams Alexander recalls that the women sat on the left hand side of the church and the men on the right hand side when she and her husband Earl started attending the church in 1943. She said the practice continued for "a long time." She also recalls two pot-bellied stoves that warmed the church in the winter time.

Owen Chapel was organized as the Euclid Church in 1859. It met in a log building until James S. Owen gave land on which the present church was built in 1866-7. The bricks were made on the site, and the metal roof was imported from England. The church was named for the land's donor.

The first minister at Owen Chapel was E. G. Sewell, long time Church of Christ minister and educator. He was for many years editor of the Gospel Advocate. Another early minister at Owen Chapel was the equally distinguished David Lipscomb, co-founder of the Nashville university that bears his name.

The congregation at Owen Chapel has always been small, many related by blood, marriage, or both, to the church's founders. Their smallness in numbers does not bespeak, however, weakness in spirit. Their faithfulness is indicated in the tradition, probably exaggerated, that Sunday services were cancelled only twice in the church's 130 odd year history, once when there was a flood, and once during the Civil War when "Yankees were raiding in the area."

Be sure to sit with your spouse next Sunday in the church of your choice, remembering that all of your ancestors were not quite so privileged. Also, running across a Yankee in Kroger's next Saturday is not an excuse for not attending church on Sunday, even if he is raiding.

Last week's article on WSM Radio Tower reminded Jimmy and Betsy Ragsdale of the Pan American's whistle that could be heard on radio every afternoon at 4:35 as the train crossed Concord Road near the tower.

A sporting item from Brentwood in 1875 read: "Bud Clark caught a coon that weighed 13 pounds. His teeth (the coon's) were worn off to the gums, and he whipped all of the dogs, finally having to be killed with a stick."

Owen's Chapel Church of Christ

Owen's Chapel Church of Christ was organized July 24, 1859, and at that time was known as the Euclid Church. The present building was constructed during the 1860's. The bricks were made from clay that came from Owen property east of the church. Slaves who were specially trained as masons in Maryland made the bricks. All of the original roofing, which was brought from England, is still in place except for a portion damaged by a tornado in 1869. The original pews and wooden partition, dividing the sections where the men and women sat, are still intact. Early preachers included David Lipscomb, founder of the Nashville school that bears his name. Church records indicate that at least twice during the Civil War, Sunday services were canceled because Yankees were "foraging in the area."



Owen's Chapel Church of Christ



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OWEN CHAPEL



Owen Chapel Church of Christ, established July 24, 1857, continued to meet uninterrupted during the Civil War in a log cabin east of this site. The present building was completed in 1867, on land donated by James C. Owen. Early ministers included E. G. Sewell, founder of the Gospel Advocate; William Lipscomb, founder of Lipscomb School, one mile east of this site; and his brother David Lipscomb, founder of David Lipscomb University. The Church continues, stable and active in the affairs of the community.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1993 Location: U.S. Highway 31, Brentwood