

Deolece Parmelee, 10/9/70

18"x 28" Official Texas Historical Marker
Gregg County (Job #3156)

Location: just off
Danville Road,
4 mi. N of Kilgore

GUM SPRING*
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*
(NEW DANVILLE)***

3156

NAMED FOR NEARBY SPRING WITH
GUM LOG CURB; ORGANIZED OCT. 7,
1850, BY THE REV. J. M. BECTON. THE
1850 ROLL: MR. AND MRS. MESHACK
BARBER, S. S. BARNETT, MRS. T. C.
BARNETT, MR. AND MRS. C. W. SCOTT,
MR. AND MRS. ALLEN SLOAN, NANCY
SLOAN, MR. AND MRS. T. W. TEMPLETON.

LOG CHURCH OF 1849 BURNED ON
DEC. 31, 1857; PRESENT STRUCTURE,
BUILT IN 1858, HOUSED DANVILLE
MASONIC LODGE NO. 101 AND (1858-73)
DANVILLE MASONIC FEMALE ACADEMY,
THE PARENT INSTITUTION OF LON
MORRIS COLLEGE. MOVING IN 1874,
CONGREGATION BECAME THE FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF KILGORE. **
(1970) ***

FILE COPY-DO NOT REMOVE

*3/4" lettering
**1/2" lettering
***1/4" lettering

RECEIVED
READY FOR

OCT 15 1970

SOUTHWELL ORDER
TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

APPROVED

Truett Latimer

for Bob Watson
10-15-70

HISTORY OF
GUM SPRING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEW DANVILLE

3156

In 1848, C. W. Scott and Haden Edwards each mutually agreed to donate five acres of land for the establishment of a Presbyterian church in the area to be called "The Old School Presbyterian Church." Though Mr. Scott and S. S. Barnett were the only Presbyterian families here at that time, they asked neighboring families to help erect a church on the lot so that there might be preaching by other denominations in the neighborhood. On completion of the log building in 1849, there were sermons by Methodists and Cumberland ministers. There were no Presbyterian ministers near. However, on September 28, ¹⁸⁵⁰ 1950, a Presbyterian minister passing through on his way from Marshall to Henderson, the Rev. M. W. Staples, ^{1.} preached a sermon and made an appointment to organize a Presbyterian church. Illness prevented his returning and an appointment was made with Rev. J. M. Becton to organize the church on the first sabbath in October, 1950. Due to a protracted meeting being held by the Methodists, the Gum Spring Presbyterian Church was organized on the first Mon. in October, ¹⁹⁵⁰ 1950.

The church was named "Gum Spring Presbyterian Church" because of a "large and never failing spring with a large gum sunk in it" found there "when the country was first taken possession of by the whites." ^{2.}

Rev. Becton's text that Mon. was Prov. 3:17, and the following members were accepted into the church: C. W. Scott, Allen Sloan, Thos. W. Templeton, Mrs. T. C. Barnett, Mrs. M. J. Scott, Messrs. Templeton and Sloan were elected ruling elders, and ^{3.} Mr. Templeton was ordained, not having been an elder previously.

In Dec. 1850, the following members were added: Meshack Barber, Mrs. Caroline Barber, Mrs. Elvira Templeton, Mrs. Elizabeth Sloan, and Mrs. Nancy Sloan. ^{4.}

1: Exhibit A. 2: Exhibit B. 3: Exhibit C. 4: Exhibit D.

On Jan. 26, 1851, a Negro boy, Samuel, belonging to J. H. Maxwell was received as a member, and Mr. Templeton was chosen as a delegate to Presbytery, meeting in Marshall.

The first communion service was held in the church on May 2, 1851, and the following children were baptised: Clavin, Mary Margaret and Mary Asenoth Sloan, Martha Ellen, James Stephen, Caroline Talitha Cumi, and Catharine Cinthy Scott, and Samuel White Barber.⁵

On Dec. 31, 1857, "the church was consumed by fire and books and furniture all lost." However, the Rev. M. J. Wallace was slated supply minister for the year 1858;⁶ and the members, under the leadership of A. Sloan, M. Barber, W. H. Leach, and Joseph D. Dickson, very soon began construction of a new church building⁷ on a site near Gum Spring.

A cemetery adjoins the churchyard. One of the earliest marked graves in the cemetery is that of the Rev. Becton, who organized the Gum Spring Church in 1850. Another is that of Columbus Maxwell who joined the Gum Spring Church in Jan. 1851.

The upper story of the building, still standing, was the meeting place of Danville Masonic Lodge 101 for many years,⁸ and also of the Woodmen of the World Lodge. This building is also where classes of the Danville Masonic Female Academy were held from 1858 to 1874. The Academy, chartered at Gum Spring in 1854, later evolved into Lon Morris, Jr. College, now located at Jacksonville.⁹

At a congregational meeting on Sept. 27, 1874, the following resolution was presented by Constantine Buckley (Buck) Kilgore, for whom the town of Kilgore was named:

- 4: See Exhibit "D".
- 5: See Exhibit "E".
- 6: See Exhibit "F".
- 7: See Exhibit Page 2, "K" and "I".
- 8: Minutes Danville Masonic Lodge 101, Kilgore, Texas.
- 9: See Exhibit "J"

'Resolved that the Presbyterian Church Organization at New Danville known as the 'Gum Spring Church' be and the same is hereby removed to the town of Kilgore, and that hereafter it shall be known as the New Danville Presbyterian Church.

Resolved further that the church building at New Danville shall not be removed and that it shall be the duty of the church to provide for preaching at said building as often as convenient and as regularly as possible at the discretion of the minister in charge, and the session of the church."

This resolution was accepted with only one member dissenting.¹⁰

The church today is known as The First Presbyterian Church of Kilgore, Texas, located at the Main and Lawrence address and has a membership of 600.

10: See Exhibit "G"