

Mt Nebo Baptist Church

Highway E
Pilot Grove, Missouri 65276

Brian Evans, Pastor
10:00 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Township:	T-47-N	Organized:	June 3, 1820
Range:	R-18-W	Disbanded:	No
Section:	27	Active:	Yes
Map:	Click Here	Updated:	July 19, 2005

Cemetery: There is a cemetery associated with this church.

Area: South of Pilot Grove, Missouri

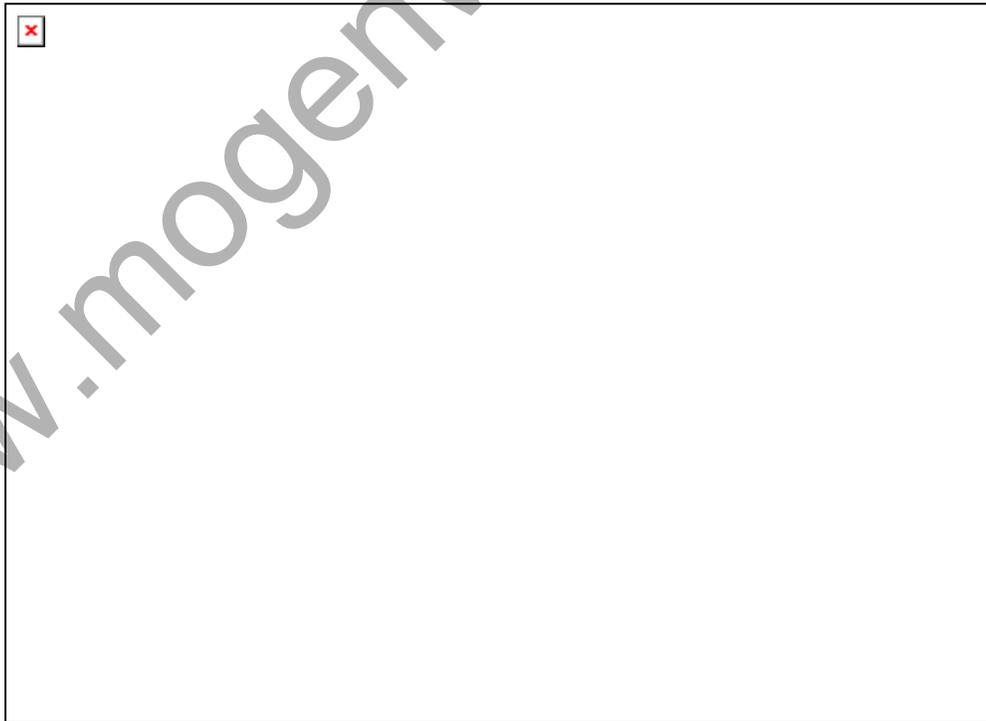
Records: These church records have been microfilmed and are available at the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Columbia Campus. Parts of the records have been transcribed and are available at the Cooper County MoGenWeb site.

[Mt. Nebo Baptist Church Records for 1849 - 1853](#)

[Mt. Nebo Baptist Church Records for 1880 - 1894](#)

[Mt. Nebo Baptist Church Records for 1900 - 1943](#)

History:



Photograph From the American Historic Buildings Survey - Library of Congress

Old Nebo Church

From "History of Cooper County Missouri" by Levens and Drake, 1876

"Old Nebo Church," located about one-half of a mile north of the present site of Bunceton, near the residence of the late judge L. C. Stephens, at the place where the Dublin school house now stands, was built in 1820. It was built by subscriptions from the settlers; and as there was very little money in circulation in the country, each one contributed his share either in work or materials furnished. William Stevens and Joseph Stevens, Sr., now living near Bunceton, in this county, sawed all the planks for this church; others furnished the shingles and logs; and others still, assisted in putting up the house and other work about it. Its denomination was Baptist. The ministers, who, during the next few years, preached at this church, were Peter Woods, William Jennings, Jacob Chism, Luke Williams and John B. Longan.

This church was very prosperous until about 1826, when there arose a division in it, on account of the difference of sentiment on the question of paying ministers and sending missionaries among the heathen nations. After considerable excitement, and several stormy meetings, the two factions separated. John B. Longan, who was leader of the faction who favored paying the ministers and sending abroad missionaries, drew off a large majority of the members of the congregation, and built a church at Henry Woolery's mill, which was called "New Nebo Church." The opposing faction continued in possession of "Old Nebo Church," and held service regularly in it.

An Amusing Incident

The first baptism by immersion took place at "Old Nebo" in the year 1820. At this baptism, there happened the following laughable incident: As this was the first thing of the kind that had happened in this part of the country, great crowds of people came from every section of the country, as notice had been given some time before. The banks of the river in which the baptism was to take place were thronged with people, and many men climbed trees in order to get a good view of the proceedings. One man, by the name of Jake Simons, climbed up a small stippling which stood on the edge of the creek, and which bent over the water with his weight. Another gentleman, by the name of John H. Hutchison, thinking this would be a fine opportunity to have some fun, took out a large pocket knife and commenced cutting away on the tree where it was bent by Simon's weight. Lower and lower bent the tree, weakened by the cutting of the knife, but the victim and those standing near were so engaged in watching the baptism, which, by that time had commenced, that they did not notice this.

At last, with one strong blow, the tree was severed, and Simons dropped, with a loud splash, into the water. The crowd shouted and haloed so long and so loud at this, that the minister was almost forced to dismiss the crowd without concluding the exercises. As it was, it took a long time to subdue the confusion which this joke had caused. As soon as Simons, who was a fighter, swam to the shore, he hurled off his coat, and threatened to whip the man who had caused this involuntary ducking. But he did not find out for years who that person was. As soon as the excitement had subsided sufficiently to permit it, the baptism was proceeded with, until all the applicants had been immersed. But the remembrance of this incident remains, to this day, fresh in the minds of all of the old settlers, who tell it again and again to their children, as illustrating the fun-loving disposition of the first inhabitants of this country.

Mt Nebo Baptist Church

From "History of Cooper County Missouri" by W. F. Johnson, 1919

Mount Nebo Church is located about one mile north of the present site of Bunceton and it was organized in 1820. An early list of members contains 63 names. Rev. A. P. Williams was the first pastor. The first church building was erected in 1838. The present building was erected in 1856. Earliest members were, Lydia Corum, Jordan O' Bryan, Abraham and Nancy Woolery.

Mount Nebo Baptist Church

From "History of Howard and Cooper Counties Missouri", 1883

Mount Nebo Baptist Church-The first meetings of this church were held one mile north of Bunceton, the date being about June 1820. The list of early members numbers sixty-three. The first name upon this list is that of Lydia Corum, whose name was recorded about June 3, 1820. With hers, and on the same date, was recorded the name of Jordan O'Bryan. Then follow the names of Abraham and Nancy Woolery. The first regular pastor was the Rev. A. P. Williams. The first house of worship was built in 1838. The present building, which is located about half a mile west of the old church, was erected in 1856. It was dedicated by the Rev. E. S. Dulin and Robert H. Harris. Present pastor, I. B. Dotson; present membership, 125.

We could get but a few of the names of the constituent members of old Mount Nebo. The Concord Association was formed on Saturday before the third Sunday, in October 1823, at Mount Nebo church.

Mt Nebo Baptist Church

From "History of Cooper County Missouri" by E. J. Melton, 1937

Old Nebo church was built one-half mile north of the site of Bunceton in 1820. It also was Baptist. Among its first pastors were Peter Woods, William Jennings, Jacob Chism. Luke Williams and John B. Longan.

THE REVEREND MR. LONGAN was a great-uncle of George W. Longan, now president of THE KANSAS CITY STAR Company. Two Longan brothers from Virginia located in Cooper County. The descendants of one gravitated eastward into Moniteau while the progeny of the other trended westward into Pettis. Both families have furnished many leaders in central and western Missouri.

Old Nebo church waxed until 1826, when it divided over paying ministers and supporting missionaries. Reverend Longan favored compensating pastors and maintaining missionaries. He drew off a large majority and built New Nebo Church. The opposition continued at Old Nebo.

A sharp line existed between exponents of culture, learning and religion as against the world, the flesh and the devil.

PIONEER PREACHERS WERE INTENSELY EARNEST

MOUNT NEBO BAPTIST CHURCH, just north of the present Bunceton, was the second congregation established in Cooper County. Among her early ministers were William Jennings, Jacob Chism, John B. Longan and Kemp Scott. Early members included Jordan O'Bryan, William C. Lowry and S. Simons

John B. Longan's Themes were "Salvation by the Sovereign Grace of God", "Christ and Him Crucified", "Repentance", "Faith and Experimental Religion".

Doctrinal discussions were emphasized. The Reverend Longan one night was lodged in a room with the Reverend Kemp Scott and a young minister who believed in the doctrine of holy perfection in this life, of which Longan doubted attainment. The Reverend Longan carefully folded his clothing and put them under the head of his bed.

The Reverend Scott asked why. Longan replied, "I am afraid this perfect man will steal my clothing before day".

"Father Longan, do you think I would steal?" the youthful minister asked.

"I hope not, my son, but for the restraining grace of God you would"; he replied.

Mt Nebo Baptist Church

From "Pilot Grove Centennial Book, 1873 –1973"

"The Year before Missouri became a state, Mt. Nebo Baptist Church was organized in a little log school house near Bunceton, Mo. The date was June 3, 1820. The first church was built near the old Dublin School site.

In 1827, the Mt. Nebo membership divided on the question of paying the ministers and sending missionaries among the heathen nations. The anti-missionary group retained the house of worship, and the missionary group worshipped in school houses and homes until 1828 when a new church was built on a site one half mile east of the present church building.

To accommodate the large membership, arms or missions were established. Two of these still exist; Providence Baptist Church and Flat Creek Baptist Church, both in Pettis County.

The present church was built in 1856; it was intended to be built of bricks. A kiln was built, the bricks burned and the walls started up. They were found to be unsafe, the walls torn down, and the present frame building built. A partition through the center section of the pews separated the "Men's" side from the "Women's" side. A gallery was built in the back, so that the Negro slaves could worship with their masters. The gallery remained until 1885, when it was torn away.

Between 1946 and 1951, the interior of the church building underwent extensive change. The old wood burning stoves were taken out; and the middle partition removed, along with general modernizing.

In 1970, the church marked its sesqui-centennial with an all day celebration.

In 1971, an educational building was built and a well drilled. The first services were held in this addition, February 6, 1972.

Kenneth Oglesby and Miss Irene Brannum have been called as missionaries to serve in the foreign mission field. Ordained to the gospel ministry were Thomas Riggs, 1835; Jesse G. Birkley, 1841; James A. Brumfield, 1899; Kenneth Oglesby, 1903; Roy Williams, 1936; Ralph Dranum, 1946, and the present pastor, Dannie L. Fisher, in 1971"

Mt. Nebo Baptist Church

From "Memorabilia of Cooper County", 1990

Mt. Nebo was organized on June 3, 1820, a year before Missouri became a state, when approximately 63 people met in a log school house a mile north of Bunceton, Cooper County, Missouri, to draw articles of faith and organize formally as a congregation. The name Mt. Nebo was adopted because it was the name of the mountain upon which Moses stood in his old age to look across at the "Promised Land" realizing that his descendants would inherit a land of milk and honey even though it was denied to him. The congregation felt like wanderers searching and they considered the Boonslick their promised land and hence, they chose the name as the highest point to which they could aspire, both morally and literally.

The first minister of Mt. Nebo was Reverend Luke Williams, the first ordained Baptist minister in the Boonslick area. Williams preached without any fee, collecting only what the congregation could give him in goods as there was little money in the region. The congregation built a log structure as soon as possible after organization. Since no money was available each member contributed either work or material; everything was donated. In the fall of 1820 Mt. Nebo joined the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Association.

Jordan O'Bryan was the first clerk. He was a layman of remarkable ability who wrote a circular letter setting forth scriptural argument on the support of the gospel ministry. He was for some years a member of the legislature from Cooper County. By 1826, in spite of the high regard of Jordan O'Brian, the members were divided on the question of paying ministers and sending

missionaries to other regions. The anti-missionary group remained in the 1820 log church and the other constituency that believed like O'Bryan became known as New Mt. Nebo. They left and worshipped in members' homes and schools until 1829 when a committee was formed to look into the construction of a new church. For some unknown reason, the actual construction of the church was delayed until 1838 when Alvin P. Williams began his pastorate to New Mt. Nebo. Under his guidance, a frame building was finished in 1839 one half mile east of the present church.

During the ante-bellum period, the church grew and members lived in parts of present day Cooper, Saline, Pettis, and Moniteau Counties. To accommodate the large membership, arms or missions were established. Two of these still exist: Providence Baptist Church and Flat Creek Baptist Church in Pettis County.

In November, 1855, at the monthly conference, a committee was appointed to raise subscriptions to build a new church. The first meeting in the new house, which is the present church, was held on the second Saturday in August, 1857. It was intended to be built of brick, a kiln was built, the bricks burned, and the walls started up. They were found unsafe, the walls torn down and the present frame building built. A partition through the center section of the pews separated the "men's side from the women's side". A gallery was built in the back, so that the slaves could worship with their masters. The gallery remained until 1885, when it was torn away.

The church conference records do not mention the Civil War, but surely this conflict loomed large in the minds of the members. On October 12, 1864, Mt. Nebo was the site of an overnight encampment of Union troops under the leadership of General Sanborn who was chasing Sterling Price.

The 20th century history of Mt. Nebo reflects the continuing concerns of a rural church bypassed by the railroads in a setting of little growth. By 1918 the great flu epidemic cancelled services and still two members died. By 1920, Mt. Nebo was determined to celebrate its Centennial and to preserve its history. Various celebrations have been held in the years since. In 1962 the church went to full time preaching for the first time in the history of the church. In 1971 an education frame building was added to the west of the sanctuary. Mt. Nebo was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. Work to restore the church's exterior was done in 1987. Present members are working to raise funds for interior repair and restoration. Members are proud of their historical meeting place where they can weekly be reminded of the courage and faith of their fore fathers.

by Robert and Ann Betteridge

Mt. Nebo Baptist Church
From "Cooper County Church Sketches" by F. Chesnutt, 1993

Mt. Nebo was organized June 3, 1820 when about 63 people met in a log schoolhouse a mile north of Bunceton to draw up articles of faith and organize formally as a congregation.

The name "Mt. Nebo" was chosen as it was the name of the mountain where Moses stood to view the Promised Land, realizing his descendants would inherit it though God had denied it to him.

Rev. Luke Williams was the first ordained Baptist minister in the Boonslick region. He preached without fee, receiving gifts of goods and services as there was little money in the western territory. The congregation built a log church and joined the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Association in fall of 1820. A frame structure was built later in 1835 west of the Petite Saline Creek where baptisms took place. Members attended from all parts of Saline, Pettis, and Moniteau Counties. From this beginning, missions were established, three of which still exist: Providence and Flat Creek Churches in Pettis County, and Heath Creek in Saline County.

In 1854 Robert H. Harris became pastor and the church voted to build a new meeting house. The new building, which was completed three years later, was intended to be made of brick. A kiln was built, the bricks fired, and the walls started when the bricks were found to be unfit. The walls were torn down and the present frame building was erected. A partition through the center separated the men's side from the women's, and a balcony was built in the back so the slaves could worship with their masters. The balcony remained until 1885 when it was removed.

Blacks were accepted as full members whether or not their owners belonged. Diversity of the economic groups within the church is reflected in the old assessment and donation lists; a wealthy planter pledged \$93.11 and a poor family 25C. Several members were exempted, mainly widows.

On October 12, 1864, Mt. Nebo was the site of an overnight encampment of Union troops under Gen. Sanborn. They were chasing Gen. Sterling Price. The Confederate General and his troops had been skirmishing in Cooper County for three days and as they retreated, took horses and supplies. What little remained was confiscated by the Union forces as they followed the retreating Confederates. The county was left destitute.

At the end of the war on March, 1866, although Southern in outlook, the church voted to "remove prejudice and show brotherly love to everyone."

In 1868 Bro. Edmund, the sexton, was asked to cite the delinquent black brethren to church. Three appeared at the next meeting to offer their excuses and were restored to full membership.

The cemetery contains graves of two of the first white settlers in the Boon's Lick region (Samuel Cole and his cousin James Cole), a veteran of the War of 1812 and several from the Civil War.

The education building was added in 1971. Sunday School records date from the spring of 1870. It was held only in the summer months until 1884. Regular Sunday services have been held since 1962.

Mt. Nebo was the site of many convocations and "protracted meetings" attended in great numbers by families over the state. Visitors were welcomed into the local homes or camped nearby. One such meeting lasted 21 days.

Mt. Nebo was listed on the National Register in 1986 and extensive restoration has been completed in the last three years.
