



1812-2012
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

BICENTENNIAL MOMENT

HYMN BOOKS & MUSIC During the early years of the church, there were no hymn books except those individually owned. These were carried back and forth from home to church by the fortunate owners. The pastor probably lined out the hymn and pitched the tune and the congregation followed. More attention was given the words and their import than to the tune or the music. Mrs. D. P. [Martha "Mattie"] Perkins had in her possession the leather-bound hymn book used by her mother, Mrs. Robert [Amanda] Currin, who sang in the choir in the old church on Vine Street. In 1886 the Session and Board of Deacons stated: "The dilapidated condition of our Hymn Books and the necessity of getting some additional ones raised the question of the propriety at this time of making a change in our Hymn Books so as to secure a more general interest area participation

in the worship by Hymns and Spiritual Songs by the congregation." At the Session meeting of July 28, 1886 the committee made a unanimous report recommending the adoption of the collection of "Psalms and Hymns & Spiritual Songs" by Charles S. Robinson D. D., assorted with & without notes as may be necessary for the use of the choir and congregation. 100 copies were ordered. In 1886, William Wendel reported that having been appointed to arrange for music, he had interviewed Miss Katie Bell Fowler and Miss Annie Childress "who had kindly promised to do all in their power to relieve the meetings of the embarrassment." Mrs. Patterson, wife of the pastor [1893-1901], soprano soloist and director, did notable work in her reorganization of the choir, especially as she included many of the younger girls of the congregation in her training. During the early part of 1912 Prof. W. B. Carlton took over the directorship of the choir. Upon his arrival in Murfreesboro he became voice teacher in Tennessee College, and later Director of Music there. In 1915 the choir membership had increased to about 40 voices. The Knight's Templar Easter service was to have been held in the Presbyterian church in 1915, but on account of the "cyclone" destruction, they met in the old Opera House with the Presbyterian Church as host. On this occasion, the choir sang the Halleluiah chorus from Handel's Messiah, a distinct occasion, since as far as is known, it was the first time it had been sung in Murfreesboro. In October 1922 Mrs. Cora Bristol Nelson was thanked for the oak hymn bulletin boards which she presented to the church and were installed. Neil Wright became Choir Director in 1949 and later, Margaret, his wife, became organist; their services lasting 40-plus years. In 1952 Mrs. Roberts had been organist. However, Mrs. John [Mary] Scott was hired as organist and Mrs. Roberts continued to play for Sunday School, evening worship and prayer meetings. In 1956 new hymnals were purchased. About 1992 Margaret Wright retired due to illness and Roseanne Smith, wife of the minister, served as organist. When she became ill, Kim Johnson, became organist and later served as both choir director and organist until 2010. Valerie Rains is the present and very gifted organist, with Jocelyn Fisher as our very talented choir director. [Information researched by Susan Daniel and the late Ernest Hooper].