



## BICENTENNIAL MOMENT

**THE ORGAN** About 1855 a pipe organ was installed in the loft in the balcony opposite the pulpit in the old church on Vine Street. The pipe organ had cost \$800-1,000. It had been ordered by Prof. Hoffman, a teacher of music at Soule College. Church members installed the organ with directions from the builder. It is not known when Harriet "Hattie" Holt Kibble Clayton began as organist for 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church, however she was organist for 30 years. She was born in Chautauqua, New York on June 7, 1835. At the age of 16, she came to Murfreesboro to accept a position as music teacher in Soule College, continuing there for a number of years. In 1860 she married Col. Richard Kibble, a Confederate soldier, who was killed in 1864 in the battle of Petersburg, Virginia. On June 24, 1874 she married Dr. H. H. Clayton, who died a number of years before she did. She died at the home of her lifelong friend, Mrs. J. B. Murfree on July 2, 1913. She was an especially gifted and trained musician. Miss Florence Hodge served as organist 1893-1901 and later became distinguished as an outstanding organist of the nation taking charge of one of the greatest organs in Chicago for some years. Other early organists were Mrs. Kate Fowler Cranor, Mrs. Fannie Batey Fleming, and Miss Eva Lewis Smith, daughter of the pastor, Rev. J. Addison Smith. In 1922, Mrs. Williams, capable wife of the new pastor, became organist. When the new church was built in 1868 at College & Spring streets, a reed organ was first used. In 1870 Mr. Hill was paid \$5 for tuning the organ. By September 1876 the Organ was sold. After the sale of the organ, a borrowed organ seems to have been used based on the entry in the Deacons' minutes that states Mr. Roulet asked permission to remove his pipe organ from the Church Building which was placed there on trial. In January 1886 the Organ committee reported having corresponded with Messrs. Pilchers & Sons of Louisville and a contract with said firm was completed for an organ at an outlay of \$1,575 to be erected in the central arch of the Church on or about the 1<sup>st</sup> of June next. Several firms had been contacted, but Pilchers & Sons gave several advantages in price and other concessions not offered elsewhere; that their work was approved by every one for whom they had built instruments and fully guaranteed by them and that they were responsible contractors. By June 1886 a pipe organ was in place and paid for and the Treasurer was ordered to pay charges for pumping the organ during the week day practice of the organist. For many years before electricity came into general use, manpower was used to run it, and the pumping was done by the Church janitor. This organ was situated in the back center of the choir loft directly under the organ pipes. After the 1913 tornado destruction of the church, the organ and the area around it were said to have not been damaged. In June 1923 after hearing a report from Dr. Williams, the Board unanimously re-affirmed its position that no one could use the pipe organ except a member of this church and then only with the consent of the Director of the choir. In 1948 a report was made to Session that the cost of a new organ would be \$12,490.65 and the cost of installing it estimated at \$2,000 to \$3,000. During the installation of the organ, worship was held in the basement of the church. The Organ was dedicated in the Winter of 1949. Chimes were added to the Organ in 1953. Today it is one of a very few fine pipe organs in Murfreesboro. [Information researched by Susan Daniel and the late Ernest Hooper.]