



BICENTENNIAL MOMENT

WE ARE PRESBYTERIAN John Spence in his Annals of Rutherford Co. states that ca 1824: “[Presbyterian Ministers] were men usually of education. . . Their manner of dressing was more of the fashion of the day. Commonly wearing black broad cloth clothing made in the styles of the times. Cloth of this color scarcely worn, only by ministers and physicians. When otherwise, it was the purpose of mourning. Style of coats, short waist, long narrow skirts, pants same material, moderately tight, black vest, white cravat bowed, a strait [sic] up shirt collar, a bell crown hat. . . Commonly walking with a gold or ivory head cane. Such the appearance and dress of ministers with few exceptions. . . Many of these ministers were often eloquent in their sermons when drawing pictures of celestial bodies. These people, strong Calvinistic in principle, so much, they were spoken of as the ‘blue stocking Presbyterians.’ . . Wearing hair round the mouth and chin was considered unbecoming to any description of ministers. When they make their appearance in the pulpit, they were cleanly shaven.” About October 1818 the name of the church was changed from Murfree Spring to the First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesborough and plans were initiated to erect the first church building. The Session records show a resolution that each Pew Holder pay annually into the hands of a committee appointed for the purpose of keeping the house repaired, the sum of one dollar. The committee consisted of Benge [Benjamin] McCulloch, Alex [Alexander] Lackey, James Maney. A statement is made in Goodspeed’s History of Tennessee: Rutherford County, that in October 1818 the first public sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was administered at this church; and that the first public collection [\$22.00] was taken up to defray expenses of the church for the six years since its organization. In October 1906 the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was considering a merger with the Northern branch of the Presbyterian Church and, apparently, many of the local members of the C. P. Church did not like the idea. First Presbyterian was searching for a pastor and some members of the C. P. congregation suggested their own pastor. First church called the Rev. Reuben Newsome and he led a number of members from the corner of Main and Spring [the location of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Murfreesboro at that time] to First Presbyterian on the corner of Spring and College, singing “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms.” First Church accepted all of the C. P. elders and deacons as its church officers too and received a number of families who became pillars of the church. [Information researched by Susan Daniel & the late Ernest Hooper].