

## PORT NECHES CHURCH OF CHRIST 1942-1950

"All the churches of Christ send greetings." Romans 16:16

Hello, my name is David Lindsey, and Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour. I praise His name above all others. I have been asked to present a brief history of the Port Neches church of Christ from its beginning until the end of 1949. On a personal note, my mother, Lois Lindsey, was one of the original members of this congregation. I was a deacon, treasurer and 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday school teacher from 1973 until 1993 when this congregation disbanded. I am now an active member of the Park Central church of Christ in Port Arthur, Texas.

In 1942, during WW II, the first meetings of the church of Christ in Port Neches began. These worship services were held in the Union Hall in the old Goolsbee and Clark building on Port Neches Avenue, where this building still exists today. There were nine families that began assembling together at this location to worship Jehovah God and His only Son, Jesus Christ. Brother Fred Walker was the first part time minister for this new church in Port Neches.

Early in 1943, construction of the rubber plants in Port Neches was taking place because of the war effort that was ongoing in Europe and the Pacific Theater. This construction attracted a large number of people from all over the United States. Among them were several more members of the church of Christ. With the encouragement and financial assistance from the Nederland, Texas church of Christ, it was decided to attempt to plant the cause of the Lord firmly in this now thriving community of Port Neches.

Brother W. G. Bass was secured to work with this group of Christians as their first full time paid minister. There were approximately 35 members of this congregation at this time in 1943, the year I was born. They met for the first time in the family home of Brother & Sister Ray Laslie in June of that year. In August of 1943, a tent was erected on the corner of Avenue C and Llano Street to hold worship services there.

About three months later, in the fall of 1943, a house on Avenue C was purchased with the assistance of the Nederland church of Christ. This house was converted into an auditorium and two small classrooms. Brother Bass worked with this new congregation for two years, during which time many people were baptized into Christ.

Shortly after WW II, Brother L. Q. Robinson was invited to come and work with this congregation as its minister. It was with the help and encouragement of Brother Robinson in 1947 that plans were made to build a new church building on the corner of Avenue C and Lillie Street. This was a major step for this small congregation.

Contributions at that time only averaged \$75.00 per week. All families there were asked if they could contribute \$100.00 each. Fifteen families answered the call for this special collection of money. An additional \$1,000.00 was donated by the Sixth Street church of

Christ in Port Arthur, Texas. This \$2,500.00 was sufficient for a down payment on the material to be used in the construction of the new church building. Very little labor was hired, because most of the work was done by the men of the congregation. This new place of worship was completed and ready for use in the fall of 1948.

In the afternoon of the first Lord's day that the building was used, the Sabine Area Wide Singing was held to inaugurate this new place of worship. The auditorium was filled to capacity with well over two hundred people in attendance. The Sixth Street congregation in Port Arthur contributed \$100.00 monthly to the work for the next four years until the church was able to meet its financial obligations without help.

Brother Aubrey Miller began serving as minister in 1949, where he remained for the next two years. The church of Christ in Port Neches from 1942 until 1950 in just 7 1/2 years, had grown by leaps and bounds and was just beginning its growth into the 1950's.

Thanks to Mrs. Beverly Evans for her efforts in compiling the history of all the churches in Port Neches during the decades of the 1930's and 1940's. It has truly been an honor to record this history of the Port Neches church of Christ. A special thanks to Helen Minton and Allen Melton for their assistance with this endeavor. May God always bless all of you. Thank you.