

History First Baptist Church } By: A.H. Outlaw Elizabeth City, N.C.



December, 1933 - May, 1946
Dr. Erwin H. Potts, a Mecklenburg County native but who came here from the pastorate of the First Church in Lexington, Virginia. On February 10, 1934 he married Miss Sarah Louise Richardson of Lexington, Virginia. To them was born one child, Yvonne, born in Elizabeth City. Dr. Potts received his B. A. degree from Wake Forest College, and Th.D. degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

This Church has a record of short pastorates, but Dr. Potts had a long and fruitful one - the longest in the history of the Church with the exception of its first pastor, Thomas Etheridge, whose successive services, however, are somewhat in doubt. While here he was also active in civic and denominational work including his services as Chairman of the Elizabeth City chapter, American Red Cross, ten years as Moderator of the Chowan Association and Director of the Biblical Recorder, State denominational newspaper.

Dr. Potts went from here to the Fair Park Church, Alexandria, Virginia, May 1, 1946 and from there to the First Church in Spencer, North Carolina, September, 1949 where he remained in a happy and successful pastorate until his sudden death of a heart attack on May 23, 1957. Funeral services were conducted at the First Baptist Church, Spencer, N. C. by Rev. William Lamb, pastor First Church in Cherryville, North Carolina whom he baptized during his Elizabeth City pastorate; Dr. Ralph Herring, pastor First Church, Winston-Salem; and Dr. William Harrison Williams, Charlotte, North Carolina. Interment was at the Flint Hill Baptist Church cemetery, Fort Mill, South Carolina, which was his old home Church and located about one mile from the Potts home place in North Carolina.

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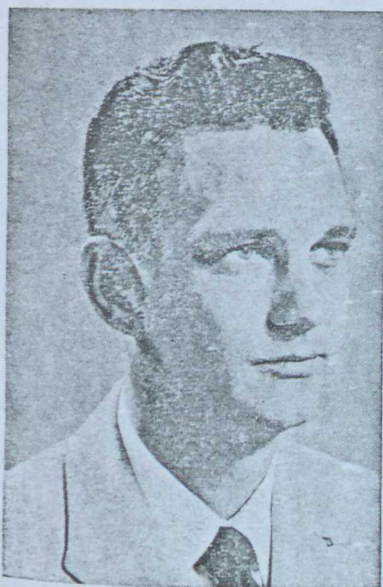
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July 1, 1946 - August, 1956 W. W. Finlator, Raleigh native and reared in the Tabernacle Baptist Church of that city. Another Wake Forest and Louisville graduate, who held pastorates in Pittsboro and Weldon, North Carolina before coming to Elizabeth City. During his pastorate he led the Church in a great building program and remodeling and completely renovating the sanctuary (See chapter on Sanctuary and the chapter on Other Buildings). Moreover, the Church reached its peak in membership while he was here. A good pastor and a great preacher who was unafraid to take a stand on issues which he believed to be scripturally and morally right, even if they were innovations which broke all traditions. The unusual length of his pastorate, much longer than the average, speaks eloquently of the congregation's faith in his ability and leadership. He resigned to accept the pastorate of the Pullen Memorial Church in his native City of Raleigh where he still serves.



First Church, Henderson, North Carolina; and pastor at Belmar, New Jersey. In addition to his college and seminary training above mentioned,

The present pastor, Maurice W. Grissom, left, is a native of Wilmington, North Carolina. He received his education at Campbell and Wake Forest colleges, North Carolina, and Crozer Theological seminary, Chester, Pennsylvania. He was married to Miss Doris Batchelor of Nashville, North Carolina on October 20, 1945. They have two lovely children: Michael 13, and Bobby 6. Before coming to this Church on January 1, 1956 Mr. Grissom was pastor at the Mother Church, Shiloh; churches in Franklin and Vance counties; Associate pastor with Dr. Norfleet Gardner,

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ERWIN HENDERSON POTTS

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Elizabeth City, N. C.; born, Charlotte, N. C., Aug. 1, 1894; son of Margaret Coltharpe and Banks M. Potts, of Fort Mill, S. C.; B.A., Wake Forest College; Th.M. and Th.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; ordained, June, 1920, Oak Grove Baptist Church, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, North Carolina; married Sarah Louise Richardson of Roanoke, Va., Feb. 10, 1934; daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William T. Richardson; Principal, Lee Baptist Institute, 1920-1921; professor, Cumberland College, 1927; pastor, Manly Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington, VA, 1929-1933; pastor, First Baptist Church, Elizabeth City, N. C., 1933 to date; moderator, Chowan Baptist Association; chairman, Elizabeth City Chapter American National Red Cross. Address: 308 W. Main St., Elizabeth City, N. C.

AMONG SOUTHERN BAPTISTS, p. 405

By: John S. Ramond

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Potts Rites Are Arranged

Funeral services for Dr. Erwin Henderson Potts, 62, of 216 Fifth Street, Spencer, will be conducted Saturday afternoon at 2:30 at the First Baptist Church in Spencer, of which he was pastor.

Dr. Ralph Herring of Winston-Salem, Dr. William Harrison Williams of Charlotte, and Rev. William Lamb of Cherryville will officiate. Burial will be in the Flint Hill Baptist Church Cemetery near Pineville.

The body will remain at the Summersett Funeral Home until time to be moved to the church to lie in state from 2 until 2:30. The Salisury - Spencer Ministerial Fellowship and the official board of the First Baptist Church of Spencer will sit in a body at the church.

Dr. Potts died Thursday morning at 10:45 in his study at the church. Death resulted from a heart attack.

A native of Charlotte, he was born August 1, 1894, son of the late Banks M. and Margaret Coltharpe Potts. He received his BA degree from Wake Forest College and the Th. M. and Th. D. degrees from the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

He organized the Fair Park Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., and was pastor there for three and a half years. He later served as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Elizabeth City for more than 12 years, the First Baptist Church in Lexington for five years, and at the First Baptist Church in Spencer for eight years.

He was a member of the Masonic Lodge in Versailles, Ind.

Survivors include his wife, the former Louise Richardson; one daughter, Yvonne Potts, a student at WCUNC; three brothers, Bryan, Banks, and A. C. Potts, all of Charlotte; three sisters, Mrs. L. B. Price of Charlotte, Mrs. Harry Swaringer of Washington, D. C., and Mrs. Howard Parker of Columbia, S. C.