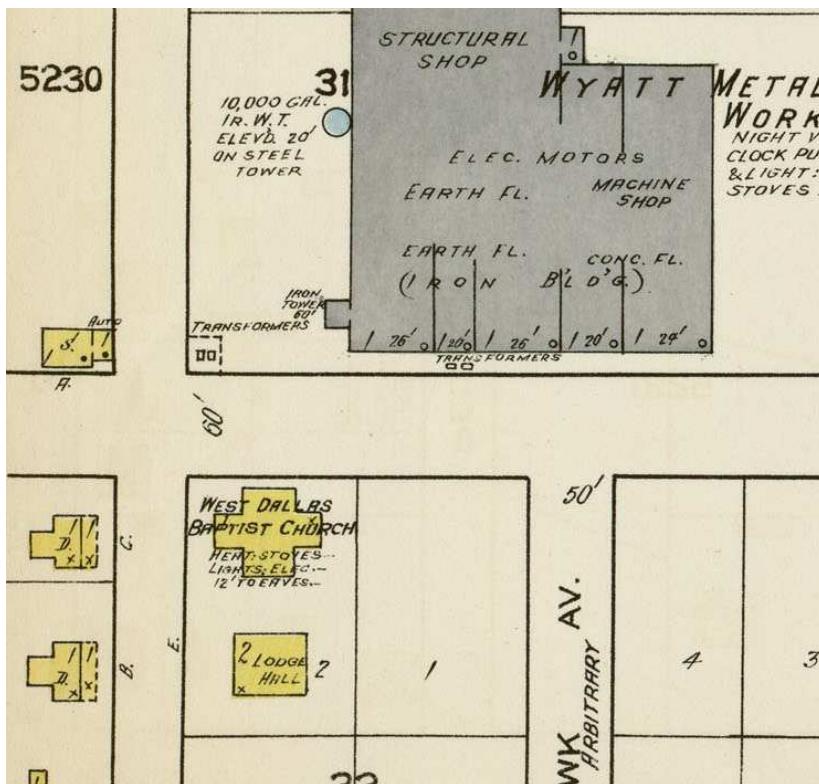


# Baptist churches of Western Heights

James D. Barnes

16<sup>th</sup> February 2026, last revised 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026



*Detail from the 1922 edition of the Sanborn Insurance maps of Dallas, Texas; Vol. 5. Sheet 579 showing the location of the 1918 building of the West Dallas Baptist Church, at the southeast corner of the intersection of what-are-now-called West Commerce and Vilbig Streets: approx: 32.7725°N; 96.8478°W*

Unfortunately, unlike the histories of *Western Heights Church of Christ*, I know of no written account of any Baptist churches located in the William Coombes Survey. Mentions of Baptist "missions" in the West Dallas area appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* almost as early as publication started in the mid1880s.<sup>1</sup> It is easy to imagine Baptist ministers had been holding West Dallas meetings earlier, performing marriage and funeral rites.

In November of 1887, H.B. Tunnell and his wife essentially donate (sell for \$10) a parcel of their land to the Building Committee of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, "for the benefit of said Baptist Church, and subject to the deposition and sale of and by ... said Building Committee for the purpose of raising funds to be used in the erection of a church building now in process of erection on the corner of Patterson Avenue and Sycamore Street for said First Baptist Church".<sup>2</sup> This donated land today has been blasted away for the sunken Interstate 30 roadbed along the east side of the Edgefield Avenue overpass. There is no indication that any church activity was ever held at this location.

In December of 1894, James Flanders and wife Mary sell to the "Village of West Dallas" Lots 3+4 in Block 13 of their *Flanders Heights Addition Revised* (the eastern half-block, on the west side of today's Winnetka Avenue, between today's Castle and Flanders Streets), on condition that the Village first move a Baptist church building standing on this land to a new site specified by Mary Flanders, a location not designated exactly in the deed. The Baptist church building was to be moved and the Village "shall place same in all respects on the new site, as it now stands in regard to foundation without damage to the building in any respect and without cost to the members of said Baptist Church". No Baptist church member is mentioned in this transaction, which spans two separate deed documents, the second being a verification by Flanders that the Baptist church building has been moved successfully, and further stating that the Village of West Dallas was to use the land "for free school purposes only".<sup>3</sup> I find no indication that any school was ever built on this site, and I find no other record locating any Baptist church building anywhere else in the William Coombes Survey before 1917, with the possible exception of a 1907 newspaper announcement of Rev. George W. Truett preaching "at the West Dallas Baptist Mission, near the public school building ..."<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, today we don't know exactly where that school building was located either, though the best guess deduces its likely location near Fort Worth Avenue and Willmet.

Through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the *Dallas Morning News* ran periodic announcements of preaching and Sunday School held at the *West Dallas Baptist Church*, like this 1899 notice.<sup>5</sup>



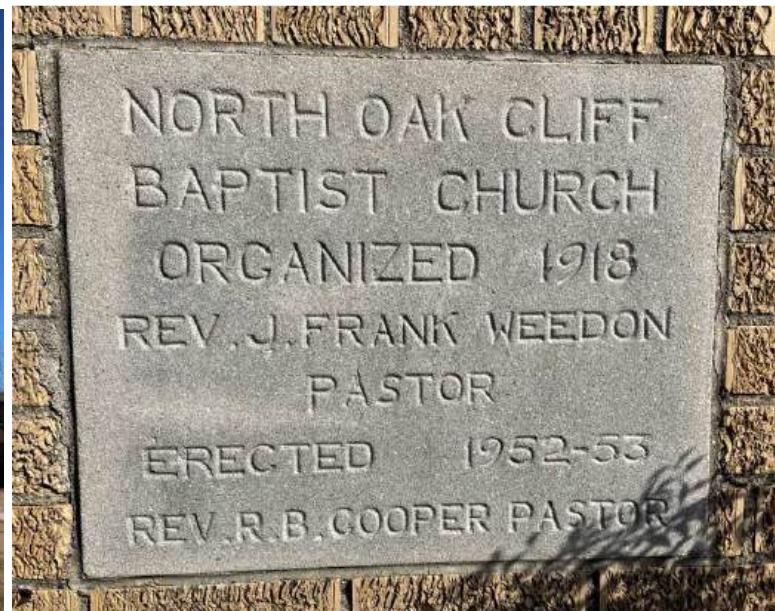
Then, in 1917, an apparently new Baptist mission was sent to West Dallas to open a new church. Reverend Frank Weedon began this mission at the southeast corner of West Commerce and Vilbig<sup>6</sup>, illustrated above five years later on the Sanborn Insurance map of that area (above). I have found no further information about what had happened to the prior West Dallas Baptist church congregation or its buildings.

In 1924 the *West Dallas Baptist Church* moved from its 1917-1918 location at West Commerce and Vilbig to a new brick building it had built for itself at 1722 North Winnetka Avenue.<sup>7</sup> At that time it changed its name to *Western Heights Baptist Church*.



1722 North Winnetka Avenue – brick building built in 1924 as *Western Heights Baptist Church*: approx: 32.76826°N; 96.8399°W

In years 1952-1953 the congregation of this *Western Heights Baptist Church* built a larger new place at 1327 Walmsley Avenue. As it relocated, again the congregation renamed itself, adopting the new name *North Oak Cliff Baptist Church*.<sup>8</sup> Its former building on Winnetka Avenue became the *Faith Temple Assembly of God*, who continues to occupy it today.



1327 Walmsley Avenue – brick building built in 1952-1953 as *North Oak Cliff Baptist Church* -- approx: 32.7697°N; 96.8431°W

*North Oak Cliff Baptist Church* was last mentioned by the *Dallas Morning News* in year 1980.<sup>9</sup> Whether the congregation disbanded or moved is unknown. Its complex on Walmsley is now occupied by *Iglesia Christian Fellowship*.

For those engaged in the struggle to define boundaries for "West Dallas" and "Oak Cliff", the succession of names used by this Baptist congregation might be of interest.

Today there is no congregation in the William Coombes Survey identifying itself as a Baptist affiliate.

(End)

## FOOTNOTES:

1. 1886-September-5th; *Dallas Morning News*, page 12; *Religious*. ("West Dallas Sunday School and preaching in the afternoon by Rev. A.F. Beddo.")
2. Dallas County Deed Records; Volume 89, pages 344-345; 1887-November-8<sup>th</sup>; H.B. Tunnel + wife, M.P. Tunnell, to W.L. Williams, chairman of the building committee of First Baptist Church, Dallas.  
*Note:* This deed was indexed under both the names "First Baptist Church", and "W.L. Williams" as Grantee, but I can find no subsequent deed whereby "First Baptist Church" sells this parcel. (No such deed is indexed under "First Baptist Church", Grantor, prior to 1914. Perhaps it was sold, but filed under a Building Committee member's name, or perhaps it was sold later.)
3. Dallas County Deed Records; Volume 192, page 292; 1894-December-1st; Mary Flanders + husband, J.E. Flanders, to Village of West Dallas. Dallas County Deed Records; Volume 184, pages 561-3; 1895-March-5th; Mary Flanders + husband, J.E. Flanders, to Village of West Dallas.  
*Note:* As an explanation for historians unfamiliar with searching through the Dallas County Deed Records, let me explain that early Texas real estate deeds are not indexed by "location", but were duplicate-filed only under the surnames of "Grantors" and "Grantees". In the case of pioneer era institutional owners, like this West Dallas Baptist Church, sometimes a deed might be filed under "Baptist Church" or "West Dallas Baptist", but in the early years of the William Coombes Survey I can find no such indexed listings. More typically such a deed was filed under the first surname listed in the group signing the deed document. If the building committee signing the deed included "Mr. Larry, Mrs. Curly, and Mr. Moe", the deed would likely be filed under the Grantee name "Larry et al." Unless you knew that Mr. Larry was the name to use to search for the deed, you could not find it using the Grantee index catalog. Likewise, a couple of decades later, if the Baptist Church then sold its land through a similar building committee, now comprised of Mr. Moe, Mrs. John, and Mr. Doe, to find the deed in the Grantor index you must know that it had been filed under the name "Moe et al.". It becomes virtually impossible to trace real estate ownership chain-of-title for this early little Baptist church. I merely happened to find the first deed mentioning the church name. I then found the second deed through searching the Flanders name as Grantor.
4. 1907-February-24<sup>th</sup>; *Dallas Morning News*; page 4; *Church Notes*.
5. For this example: 1899-December-10<sup>th</sup>; *Dallas Morning News*, page 9; *Advertisement*.
6. 1943-May-29<sup>th</sup>; *Dallas Morning News*; page 11; *Anniversary Rites Set by Dallas Church*
7. 1924-June-20<sup>th</sup>; *Dallas Morning News*; page 13; *West Dallas Baptists Completing New Church*.
8. 1968-September-7<sup>th</sup>; *Dallas Morning News*, page 8; *50th Year to be Noted*
9. 1980-August-3<sup>rd</sup>; *Dallas Morning News*; page 65; *Lees to Celebrate 60th Anniversary*.

(End of Footnotes)