



Baptist General Convention Origins

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The first corn crop in Texas was planted by a Baptist layman named William Kincheloe. Mrs. Massie Millard held the first Baptist prayer meeting in the thickets just outside of Nacogdoches while hiding from the Indians. The first Sunday School in Texas was held in San Felipe by T.J. Pilgrim in spite of the Mexican government's ban on evangelical meetings. In that same year (1829) Lydia Allcorn became the first Baptist convert in Texas. The first Baptist minister ordained in Texas was Noah T. Byars, the man in whose

blacksmith shop the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed. The first "missionary" Baptist church in Texas was started in 1837 when Z.N. Morrell found a group of Baptists in Washington-on-the-Brazos and formed them into a church. The first Baptist university in Texas was chartered in 1845 in Independence. It eventually became the present day universities of Baylor and Mary Hardin Baylor.

In an era of "firsts," the first Baptist association was formed. Four ministers and about 25 Baptists met in Independence for that purpose in June, 1840. The ministers were divided equally on the issue of whether or not the new association was to be missionary or anti-missionary. The meeting was adjourned without action. However, one of those in favor of forming a missionary association was T.W. Cox. He called a second meeting for October 8, 1840. Eleven people went to Travis and unanimously formed the first Baptist association in Texas. Though originally known as the Unity Association, it eventually was renamed Union. Brother Cox was pastor of all three churches that sent messengers and he was chosen as moderator, R.E.B. Baylor as corresponding secretary and J.W. Collins as clerk. The next year, 1841, six new churches joined and in 1842, there were 12 Baptist churches in Texas with a total membership 433. In 1843 the Sabine Association was formed and shortly thereafter others started until in 1847 the Union association instructed its corresponding secretary to "ascertain their (other Baptist organizations) views and wishes in regard to the formation of a Baptist State Convention." So, on September 8, 1848 twenty-two churches met at the Antioch church in Anderson "for the purpose of organizing a Baptist State Convention." The constitution stated, "The objects of this convention shall be Missionary and Educational, the promotion of harmony of feeling and concert of action in our denomination, and the organization of a system of operative measures to promote the interest generally, of the Redeemer's Kingdom within this state."



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During a time of beginnings, Texas Baptists had big plans. They also had the wherewithal to see these plans through and the desire to do together what they could not do individually in reaching Texas for Christ.