

**The first page of the booklet prepared for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our church, June 5, 1956. A Century of Service by Rev. E.F. Montgomery, Sr.**

John 4:38. "Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors." In the spring of 1856 a young minister by the name of Brazille E. Lanneau was visiting relatives, the McLeod's and Hoopers in Alligator, East Florida. Finding several families of the Presbyterian persuasion he prevailed upon them to petition the Presbytery of Florida to organize them into a church. Official record of this organization is carried on the first page of the Session book dating back to 1856. Quote:

"Application having been made by certain members of the Presbyterian Church, resident in Alligator, East Florida, for organization as a church. The Presbytery of Florida at its meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, April 18, 1856, appointed the Rev. D.J. Auld to organize the same.

Where upon at a meeting held for that purpose in the Methodist church on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1856, after appropriate religious exercises the following persons presented themselves and were received into full membership viz;

Martin P. Doby by certificate from Monticello Pres. Ch. Fla.

Sarah H. Doby by certificate from Steel Creek Pres. Ch. N. Car.

James M. Baker by certificate from the Methodist Church Alligator, Fla.

William Hagen by certificate from Upper Long Cane Pres. Ch. S. Car.

The following persons who were members of other churches but from satisfactory reasons having no certificates were received upon examination viz;

Wm. O. Jeffries of St. Mary's Pres. Ch. Geo.

Mary Jeffries of St. Mary's Pres. Ch. Geo.

Williams of St. Augustine Pres. Ch. Fla.

Lucy McLeod of Hampden-Sidney Me. Ch. Va.

The above having solemnly agreed and covenanted to walk together as the disciples of Jesus Christ in a church relation according to the acknowledged doctrine and Order of the Old School Presbyterian Church as set forth in the Confession of faith were received as a particular church under the care of the Presbytery of Florida. The church having thus organized, preceded to the election of an elder, where upon Martin P. Doby was nominated and unanimously elected and signifying his acceptance the ordination was fixed for the morrow morning after the sermon. After prayer the meeting adjourned."

M. P. Doby, Clerk of Session

Mrs. Mary Murdock was the first new member to be received on June 1<sup>st</sup> (Sunday morning). So delighted was Mr. Lanneau that he sat right down and wrote to his fiancée, Miss Fanny Eccles of Fayetteville, N.C. giving a full account of the meetings by Rev. D.J. Auld and the subsequent organization, and he further told of the purchase of the block of land on which a sanctuary was to be built. This letter postmarked "Alligator East Florida," is now in the archives of the church presented some years ago by a descendent of this Miss Fanny Eccles, and is given in full on another page in this history.

No doubt, Mr. Lanneau supplied the church with preaching, although he was in ill health, until a pastor was called, Rev. Henry C. Brown, who came in 1857.

The first sanctuary was built on traditional lines with a gallery around the rear and two sides for the slaves to sit who attended religious services with their families and who were frequently received as members. One colored woman, Aunt Zilphy Sawyer, is remembered by old members as a faithful worshipper in the 70's.

It is hard for us, a century later, to imagine the primitive conditions in 1856. No railroad as yet had been built, and the public roads were deep in sand in dry weather, and creeks and rivers in flood time were impassable. The best traveled road was from St. Augustine to Tallahassee via the natural bridge over the Sante Fe. Columbia County, which at that time comprised also lands now in Gilchrist, Baker, and Union counties, was listed in the census as having a total population of 5,221 whites and 1,940 slaves. Newnansville and Micanopy were the largest towns in the area.

Other Presbyterian churches in Florida Presbytery were St. Augustine (organized 1824), Euchee Valley (1826) Philadelphia (1826), Tallahassee (1832), Quincy (1833), Madison (1840), Jacksonville (1840), Pensacola (1845), Greenfield (1851), Micanopy (1854), Palatka (1856). These twelve churches made up Florida Presbytery in the Synod of South Georgia and Florida.

**\*\*End of E.F. Montgomery, Sr.'s introduction. E.F. Montgomery, Jr. added the below.\*\***

You will notice that as many Presbyterian churches were organized in West Florida as in East Florida due to the fact that a good many Scotch-Irish immigrated into West Florida during the early territorial period.

The French and Indian War: In the north, France and England were contending for Hegemony over the larger part of the continent. The French Fur-hunting ranges were pushing eastward from the Mississippi and Great Lakes, while English farmsteads were moving westward from the Atlantic. In the inevitable collision which we call the French and Indian War (or the Seven Years War) 1754-1763, Spain quickly and easily seized Havana, Cuba. In the humiliating peace treaty that followed, Spain had to sacrifice Florida in order to regain the rich Cuban port.

Florida was now English (1763), and treaty provisions placed the western boundary of Florida at the Mississippi River. The British thus acquired more land than could efficiently be administered as a single unit. They decided to create two Floridas, East Florida, comprised most of what is today Florida, except for the panhandle. East Florida was separated from West Florida by the Apalachicola River. East Florida's capital was St. Augustine. Pensacola was west Florida's capital. (The Apalachicola River is a little over half way between Tallahassee and Panama City.)

The British ceded Florida back to Spain in 1783 as a result of losing the Revolutionary War, (Treaty of Paris 1783). Spain in turn receded to France a large portion of West Florida in its western extremities.

In 1819 a treaty was prepared in Washington for transference of Florida from Spain to the United States for the purchase price of 5 million dollars. No money is paid to Spain, however, as American indemnities (reimbursements for loss, damage, compensation) equaled the purchase price. Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819.

1822 Florida officially becomes territory of the United States. William P. Duval is the first Governor of the territory, following Andrew Jackson's short stint as Governor.

One of Andrew Jackson's administrative acts while temporary governor of Florida was to create Escambia and St. John's counties with the Suwannee River being the dividing line between them.

July 1822, the first administrative council meets in Pensacola and carves out two more counties from the unmanageable large counties of St. Johns and Escambia. The two new counties were Duval and Jackson counties.

Columbia County was created on February 4, 1832.

## FLORIDA PRESBYTERY

The year 1840 marks the origin of the Presbytery of Florida. Since a sufficient number of churches were now established in the territory it was considered wise to organize a separate Presbytery of Florida under the Synod of Georgia and South Carolina.

Between 1840 and 1876 the once small Presbytery of Florida had grown with churches in East, West and South Florida. In its meeting in 1878, the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia organized a second Presbytery. This Presbytery was named "St. Johns Presbytery" and included all counties in the south, together with Baker, Nassau, Bradford and Putnam in the North. Hamilton and Columbia counties were left in Florida Presbytery. These two Presbyteries and the Savannah Presbytery were grouped into a Synod of South Georgia and Florida.

By the year 1890 it was evident that one Presbytery, St. Johns, could not minister to so large a territory as had now been opened up toward South Florida. Consequently, in 1890, the Synod of South Georgia and Florida made a further division, separating off the southern counties. The Suwannee River became the boundary line in the west. The county lines of Putnam (Palatka), St. Johns (St. Augustine), Marion (Ocala), and Levy (Chiefland) formed the southern boundary of the new Presbytery to be called "Suwannee Presbytery". Hamilton and LaFayette counties were left in Florida Presbytery, but in 1905 they petitioned to be transferred to Suwannee Presbytery. For the first time in 1890, Florida was made a separate Synod, "the Synod of Florida" with three Presbyteries; Florida, St. Johns, and Suwannee.

In 1983 when the Presbyterian Church U.S. united with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. the name of Suwannee Presbytery was changed to the Presbytery of St. Augustine. There were some of us who did not think that

changing the name of our Presbytery, which we had for nearly a century, was necessary. But politics prevailed and the Presbytery voted to change its name, although none of the rest of the Presbyteries in Florida changed their names!

**Prepared by E.F. Montgomery, Jr. for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the Lake City Presbyterian Church, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006.**

Before we get into the historical context of the times in which our church was organized, let us look for just a few minutes at the actual organization of the church as it is recorded for us in the minutes of our church.

First of all, our church was organized in the Methodist Church. The Methodist Circuit riders had made Alligator, East Florida, a preaching point since the 1820's, but they did not organize formally until 1854. They built their first church on the lake we call today, Lake Isabella, but in that day it was called "Peter's Pond." The church was located where the garden center use to be, directly across the street from what is today Lake Isabella Park. The old Methodist parsonage still stands on the southwest corner of Hernando and Means Street.

Washington Mackey Ives in his journal relates an interesting anecdote. He writes that he and a friend went serenading one evening on Peter's Pond while there was preaching going on in the Methodist Church. Their serenading disturbed the Methodist, and some of the church members came down to the Lake Shore and told them that they were disturbing their service, and so they stopped and came in.

We were not only organized in the Methodist Church, but since the Methodist at that time only had services twice a month, we used their church the other two Sundays for our services until our church was built.

The Methodists did one other important thing for us. We were such a small group with limited resources, that we had not been able to purchase a communion service. The Methodist loaned us theirs, until the First Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville, N.C. sent us the beautiful set which we still have, and keep safely stored in our fire proof vault.

While visiting in Lake City with relatives of his, the Hoopers, Rev. Brazille Lanneau, met a charming young lady by the name of Fannie Eccles whom he married. She was from Fayetteville, N.C. and at their wedding reception, Rev. Lanneau told the minister of the Fayetteville Church of their having to borrow a communion service from the Methodist every time they had communion. The Fayetteville minister said that he would take care of that, and soon thereafter, there was a beautiful communion service received in the mail. It was made of pewter with four layers of silver.

Also, one of our charter members, James M. Baker, who had joined the Methodist Church when he moved to Lake City because there was no Presbyterian Church, had his membership transferred to our church. Lucy McLeod, another of our charter members, transferred her membership from the Hampden-Sydney Methodist Church in Virginia.

We owe a lot to the Methodists in helping us get our church started here in this community, and we have always had a close relationship with the Methodists.

Another of our charter members whom I serendipitously have learned a lot about is William Hagen and the Hagen family. Some years ago now a young lady from Columbia, S.C. called me and told me that some of her ancestors had moved to Columbia County from Abbeville, S.C. back in the 1850's. She said

that they were staunch Presbyterians, and she thought that I might be able to help her find out something about them. The young lady's name is Kim Hagen and she is here with us this morning. She drove to Lake City and she and I spent 3 days finding out just how important the Hagens were to our church and community. Some of the things we found out were:

First, that William Hagen was a charter member of our church, and because he lived some 13 miles south of Lake City and drove his horse and buggy to church every Sunday, he installed a hitching post on an old water oak behind the church.

In 1868, he and others of his family who had moved to Florida, helped organize the Mt. Tabor Presbyterian Church which was located about 3 miles east of what is now Watermelon Park. The old cemetery is still there, and a number of the Hagens are buried there. Today it is called the Hawthorne Cemetery. The Old Hagen home was on Arky Rogers Property.

We also found that Captain Andrew Brown Hagen was Clerk of Session of our church for 30 years, from 1868 until he died in 1899. He was also a very prominent citizen of Lake City. My Dad writes of Captain Hagen as Clerk of Session of our church. . . "We owe a great debt of gratitude to Captain Hagen as our Clerk of Session. He not only kept meticulous minutes of our church for 30 years, but he also went back and recopied the earliest minutes of the church, getting them in better order. He very carefully recorded each person who joined our church, together with those who were baptized, married and died in the 30 years he was Clerk of Session. He did all of this while being at the same time, a very busy attorney in our town, county and state.

Captain Hagen's wife, Lottie Hagen, kept the communion service. In those days they did not leave the communion service in the church for fear it might be stolen. Someone in the church kept it in their home. They also washed the communion table cloth, polished the silver, and did anything else that needed to be done before each communion service which was usually on the first Sunday in each quarter.

Lottie Hagen kept the communion service in her care until she died in 1943. She joined our church in 1877, so she kept the communion service for 66 years. Clara Hagen, her daughter, took this responsibility when her mother died in 1943, and kept it until her death in 1976, 33 years. Together this mother and daughter kept the communion service of our church for 99 years. When Clara Hagen died the communion service was stored in the fire proof vault which had been built in our new church, and a committee of the women of the church now care for it.

Clara Hagen married the widower C.G. Campbell and helped raise his three boys, one of whom, Billy Campbell, has come back to Lake City to retire.

One other phrase in this organizational document needs some explanation. "The above, having solemnly agreed and covenanted to walk together as the disciples of Jesus Christ in a church relation according to the acknowledged doctrine and order of the "Old School Presbyterian Church." What was the "Old School Presbyterian Church"? I will try to make this as simple as possible. As the population of the country moved from the east coast to the western frontier, it became more and more difficult for the Presbyterian Church with its limited

number of ministers to stay up with the western movement. The Presbyterian Church and the Congregational Church were very close doctrinally, their major difference being their form of government. In the Congregational Church, the ruling body is the congregation. Any issue which comes before the church is voted on by the whole congregation. The Presbyterian Church is ruled by Presbyters, or Elders, elected by the congregation.

Since the two denominations were so close doctrinally, in 1801 they formed what they called a cooperative union. By this plan, a Congregational minister could become a minister in the Presbyterian Church, and could sit in Presbyterian Courts. The same was true of Presbyterian Ministers in the Congregational Church. The Presbyterian Church grew faster than it had ever grown before or since. It grew from 20,000 members in 1801 to 220,000 members in 1836.

But during the same time problems began to arise. As the church grew, both Congregational and Presbyterian, the Congregational form of church government became more and more cumbersome, and harder and harder to agree on issues that came before the churches. What was even more difficult for Presbyterians, and Congregationalist to accept was the very liberal doctrinal movement which began in the Congregational Church in New England, out of which grew the Unitarian Church.

The church became divided into two parties over these issues of church government and doctrine. The Old School Presbyterians were more doctrinally conservative and evangelistic. So the organization of our church says, "The above having solemnly agreed and covenanted to walk together as the disciples of Jesus Christ in a Church relation according to he acknowledged "Doctrine and Order of the Old School Presbyterian Church" as set forth in the Confession of Faith."

Now let's look at the historic context in which our church was founded. What was going on in Alligator Town, Columbia County, and the State of Florida in the 1850's and early 1860's?

Most of us know that the name of our community, Alligator, was derived from Chief Alligator, who was the chieftan of a Seminole village which is believed to have been located on the high bank on the northeast side of the lake which has been called, "Lake Alligator," "Big Lake" and "Big Alligator Lake." Flint chippings and pottery shards have been found in this location, which usually indicates the presence of an Indian village. For some of us old enough to remember, this is where the old Lake City Country Club once stood. The old Country Club road on the east side of the city is all that is left to remind us of that fact.

Chief Alligator himself was an interesting person. Whereas it was not uncommon for some Indians to be over 6 feet tall, Chief Alligator was 5 feet tall. He would barely have come up to the shoulders of most of us here this morning.

General Duval, the first territorial Governor of Florida, describes Chief Alligator as having "good proportions" (which means that he was well built), "open face" (which I take to mean that he did not have a sly or suspicious look, but looked you straight in the face) and a "well sculptured Roman nose."

Duval also said that he was a “shrewd, crafty, and intelligent chief, who possessed good manners and was always regal in dealing with white men. He also said that he had a good sense of humor and was a natural comedian who “often brought out laughter even during solemn council meetings.” He sounds like the kind of a person I would like to have known.

But none of those who began to inhabit the community which came to be known as Alligator Town (in the 1820's when Florida became a territory of the U.S.) probably ever knew Chief Alligator personally. In February 1813 a force of 250 Tennessee Mounted Volunteers moved into North Florida. They destroyed 400 Indian houses, some 2,000 bushels of corn and several hundred cows and horses.

The Seminoles in the area east of the Suwannee River were faced with starvation and their strength was broken. It was probably at this time, in 1813, that Chief Alligator moved his village south, close to where Gainesville is located today, and joined the Alachua Indians.

But this is not the last we hear of Chief Alligator. On December 28, 1835, Chief Alligator, Chief Micanopy, and Chief Jumper lead 180 Seminoles in what is called “The Dade Massacre” which occurred near the city of Bushnell, about half way between Tampa and Ocala. These chiefs and their warriors ambushed a detachment of 100 enlisted men and 8 officers on their way from Fort Brooke in Tampa to bring much needed help to Fort King near Ocala. Fort King had been attacked by a group of Indians on the war path led by Ocoola. The battle near present day Bushnell lasted all day, and by late afternoon only three soldiers were still alive and only one of them was able to crawl away at night and return to Fort Brooke in Tampa to report what had happened.

This was the beginning of the Second Seminole War which lasted from 1835 until 1842 and which impacted Columbia County and Alligator in many harmful ways. First, a number of families who lived out in the country were massacred. Those men who did not have a family to protect, and even some of those who did, joined the militia to fight the Indians. To protect its citizens in and around Alligator, there was a fort built right in the middle of town where the First National Bank was later built, a building which has now become the City Hall. It was called Fort Lancaster.

For several years during this long and bloody war, Alligator was called Lancaster. When the war was over the name Lancaster was changed back to Alligator. Some of us may be wondering why they would choose such a name as Alligator. Let me remind you that Jacksonville was called “Cow Ford” and Gainesville was called “Hogtown.” How you have liked to live in “Hogtown”?

Chief Alligator was one of the chief battle leaders throughout the Second Seminole War. He finally surrendered to the United States Officials on October 18, 1841.

The name “Alligator” was destined to be changed sooner or later. It is reputed that a Mrs. William D. Ross started the movement to change the name. Her motive was that her daughter was getting ready to go to a rather prestigious school for girls, and she was afraid that her daughter would be the “butt of jokes



among the girls” when they found out that she came from a town named Alligator.

On December 14, 1858, Senator W. W. McAll of Columbia County introduced a bill in the Florida Legislature to incorporate the city of Alligator. On the second reading that day, McCall amended his motion to read, “That in every case where the name ‘Alligator’ appears that the name ‘Lake City’ be substituted.” On December 16, the bill was voted on and passed without a single ‘nay’.

The bill faced tougher going in the House of Representatives. On Tuesday, December 21, 1858, the Senate bill entitled “An Act to Change the Name of the County Seat of Columbia County from Alligator to Lake City” was read. Representative John Frink of Hamilton County rather mischievously or perhaps maliciously moved to amend the motion by striking out the word “Lake” and substituting the word ‘crocodile’ instead. Most of the House realized that Representative Frink was being facetious and the bill passed the House on January 14, 1859 with only three negative votes, one of those being that of Representative Frink of Hamilton County. On January 15, the last day of the Legislative Session, Governor Madison Starke Perry signed the bill, and Alligator became officially Lake City.

From 1845, when Florida became a state, til 1860, the population of Florida doubled from approximately 70,000 inhabitants to 140,000. However, most of the population growth was in Central Florida where cotton had become king. Columbia County did not experience much of this growth.

But growth was coming, with the coming of the railroads. On March 13, 1860 the Florida Atlantic and Gulf Central Railroad officially opened between Jacksonville and Lake City, and that was just the beginning of railroad expansion west to Pensacola and south into Central Florida. All these trains passed through Lake City on their way to the port city of Jacksonville, or up the east coast. Lake City became the hub of passenger and freight transportation to and from west and central Florida.

What were the people in our community and our county like during this period of our history?

In 1854, a British traveler by the name of Charles Lanman, describes his journey from Newnansville to Tallahassee in his book published in 1856 and entitled “Adventures in the Wilds of the United Sates.” He stopped at Alligator on his way, and describes our little town and its inhabitants in this way: “A collection of log cabins, occupying a cheerless sandy clearing in the midst of pine woods, its leading families are intelligent and respectable, but it harbors a set of tavern and grocery store keepers who are a disgrace to Florida. What supports the Hamlet I can hardly imagine, unless it be the fact that it is a sort of resting place for the teamsters and travelers, who have occasion to pass from Jacksonville to middle Florida.”

For the rural folk of Columbia County, Lanman offered the following observations:

“The opinion that I formed of the people generally who lived secluded in these piney woods was that they were uniformly kind and obliging, moral as could be expected, but certainly not over-burdened with intelligence. Many of them had

never seen a canal, a railroad, or a steamboat. And all they knew of the north was that the northerners wanted to free all the slaves.”

As he crossed the Suwannee River on his way to Tallahassee, Lanman’s coachman told him that he was lucky to have “escaped” from east Florida, an area the coachman described as “the land of hog and hominy.”

I would take issue with Mr. Lanman’s remark that our rural people “were not overburdened with intelligence,” and then his equating intelligence with their never having seen a canal, or railroad, or steamboat. I would argue that they were very intelligent in the areas of their endeavors such as farming, cattle raising, trapping, building their own houses, and making most of their own household utensils as well as their own clothes.

There was one precocious young boy growing up in Lake City during these days. His name was Washington Mackey Ives, and he was the great-grandfather of Tommy Ives who is a member of our church at the present time, and is here with us today. This bright young man kept a journal from the time he was 16 years old in 1859 until he was 18 years old and joined the Confederate Army. After fighting through the Civil War he came back to Lake City and became one of its most prominent citizens. His journal is the best source we have of what Lake City and its citizens were like in the days when our church was organized. On the first page of his diary he writes:

“Lake City contains 7 dry goods stores, 1 jewelry shop, 1 tin shop (a tin shop was where eating utensils, and other household objects made of tin were crafted), 1 eating house, 2 printing offices, 33 dwellings, 2 livery stables, 2 hotels, 3 schools, 2 blacksmith shops, 2 bar rooms, 2 grog shops, 1 cabinet shop, 2 apothecary shop, (drug stores), 2 churches (Presbyterian and Methodist) 1 court house, 5 lawyers offices, and one Masonic Lodge.”

My great-grandfather, John Watt Montgomery, was a Presbyterian Minister in North Carolina during the 1850’s, and early 1860’s. The climate in North Carolina did not agree with him, and in the latter part of the 1850’s and early 1860’s he would come to Florida every winter and stay for an indefinite period of time. Washington Mackey Ives speaks of going to hear Rev. Montgomery preach.

Washington Mackey Ives writes in his journal that my great-grandfather preached in the Lake City Presbyterian Church on a number of occasions. He records on Sunday, February 9, 1861, “I went to church this morning, which was the first time I had been in the Presbyterian Church since it was plastered. Mr. Montgomery preached.” My father relates that when the Hackney Annex was being built in the 1930’s they dug up pieces of this old plaster. “I went again this afternoon,” Mackey Ives writes, “Mr. Montgomery is merely staying for his health.”

John Watt Montgomery records in his diary that several times he officiated at communion services and moderated the session when our church did not have a minister, or when their minister was away.

After the Civil War, my great-grandfather moved his family to Florida. Somewhere on his journey from Savannah to Lake City, the conductor on the train, probably thinking that a “preacher” would be an easy “take”, told my

grandfather that he would have to pay more for his luggage. When my grandfather refused, the conductor told him that he was going to put his luggage off at the next stop unless he paid up. When my grandfather threatened to write the President of the railroad and report this conductor's attempted extortion, the conductor grabbed my grandfather's beard, whereupon my grandfather slugged him in the face, knocking the conductor to the floor, and straddling him, my grandfather was getting ready to give him a good beating when the conductor gave up, got up off the floor, and went off very angry. My grandfather was sure that the conductor was going to get his pistol, and he went to get his pistol. But my grandmother would not let him have his pistol. Instead of getting his pistol, the conductor disappeared for the rest of the trip, except when the trail stopped to let passengers on or off. By the time the train got to Lake City, the news of the fight had preceded them, and my great-grandfather was from henceforth, known in Lake City as "the fighting parson."

One more thing needs to be said about the condition of those times when our church was organized. The storm clouds of war were beginning to overshadow the southern states. . . . and on January 10, 1861 the Florida Legislature voted 62 to 7 to secede from the Union. The Presbyterian Church was organized just 3 1/2 years before the beginning of the Civil War. A war which was to last 4 long years . . . a war in which many Columbia County men fought and were killed . . . a war in which the biggest battle fought in Florida was just a few miles from Lake City (the battle of Olustee), and many of the wounded were laid out on the pews in the Presbyterian Church before being transferred to the largest rooming house in town, the Cathey House, which was being used as a make shift hospital. The Cathey's were Presbyterian, and my father and I had the graveside service for the last of the Cathey's in July, 1980. She had never forgotten the heritage of her family in this church, and when she died she left \$25,000 to this church.

Governor John Milton committed suicide on April 1, 1865. General Lee surrendered on April 9, 1865.

Some would say that this was a very inauspicious time to organize a church, but I am reminded of an inscription on the cornerstone of an old church in England which read:

"In the year 1653 when all things sacred were throughout this nation either demolished or profaned, Sir Robert Shirley, Baronet, founded this church whose singular praise it is to have done the best things in the worst times and hoped in them in the most calamitous."

That is what the Presbytery of Florida and this church did. "They did the best things in the worst times, and hoped in them in the most calamitous\_"

(In 1653, England was in the midst of a Civil War led by Oliver Cromwell against Charles I, King of England and Scotland After Charles I was beheaded, Cromwell became Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England. The Puritans had taken over the government and it was not a good time for Sir Robert Shirley to be founding an Anglican Church!)

NOTE:

The above essay on "The Historic Context" in which the Lake City Presbyterian Church was organized in 1856 was read by James Montgomery at the luncheon celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our church. He only had 20 minutes to speak so by necessity, he had to leave out a goodly portion of that which I had written.

Also, I was not able to include, in my essay, at least one important historic event which was occurring during the very time in which the church was being organized, that being, the Third Seminole War (1852-1858).

The Third Seminole War was "technically" not a war in the sense that the United States Army, or the Florida militia was fighting large groups of Indians. There were not many Indian warriors left in Florida after the Second Seminole War. Many had been killed and many more sent to the Indian Reservations out west.

The Third Seminole War was primarily small groups of marauding Indians scouting out and attacking unprotected homesteads or small villages that could not protect themselves. The marauders would kill the white settlers (men, women, and children), take all of their foodstuffs, and anything else which would be useful to them, and then burn their homes, barns, etc. . . .

After one of their raids they would disappear into the woods, or preferably swamps, where the whites could not find them, or get to them, until they were ready to carry out another raid. The whites never knew where they were going to hit next!

Some historians believe that Rebecca Charles was killed in the Third Seminole War. Rebecca and her husband, Rueben Charles, got a permit from the Territorial Government of Florida to operate a ferry across the Suwannee River where the Old Indian Trail and Spanish Trail crossed and the Belamy Road from St. Augustine to Tallahassee was to cross when it was constructed in 1824. Rueben and Rebecca Charles were the first Europeans to settle in North Central Florida, and they settled at what is today called "Charles Springs."

Rueben Charles was killed in 1836 during the Second Seminole War. Rebecca, his wife, continued to operate the ferry and manage the store and lodging place for travelers passing through. Then in 1852 she was shot and killed. Some historians believe that she was killed by marauding Indians, but in the nearly 30 years she had lived on the river she had made friends with the Indians who lived in that vicinity. As more Europeans began to settle in that area there were some who were angry that the Charles family had befriended the Indians, whom they looked on as enemies.