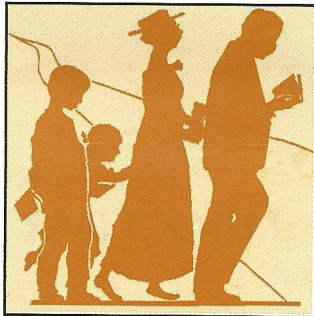


# A PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH

1894-1994



Munger Avenue Baptist Church  
Centennial Journal

# FORWARD



*A single, solitary family makes their way down a trouble-laden path to a place where they can worship the God of their faith. They bring with them their burdens of the day, and their hopes for tomorrow. It is a pilgrimage as ancient as the man of Ur, and as contemporary as the twenty first century extended family in this age of cyber space.*

For Munger Avenue Baptist Church, this symbol of the family, has been our signature in 1994, representing our one hundred years as one family of faith. This journal chronicles, as much as possible, the corporate and personal trials and triumphs of one body of believers. For every documented event on these pages, there are hundreds of accounts that will go untold, but not unrewarded. The writer of Hebrews bares record of this: "...without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

For one hundred years we have sought him. It is our hope that this book will serve as a witness to both the weary sojourner and the new seekers, as we, together continue this pilgrimage of faith with the word of God as our guide: "Wherefore seeing, we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witness, let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1



*"Once I knew a preacher,  
Preached the Bible thru and thru.  
Till he went down on Deep Ellum,  
Now his preaching days are thru."*

*Deep Ellum Blues"  
Blind Lemon Jefferson*

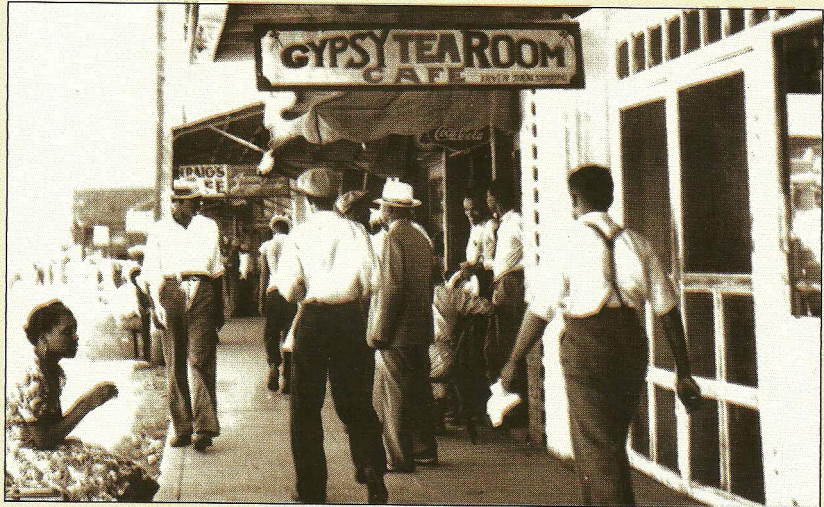
Immortalized in song, such was the power of the lure of Deep Ellum, that "seedy, anything goes district" described as the "Harlem of the South". For a band of pilgrims on a journey of faith, this was Canaan.

The biblical Canaan was depicted in the bible as both a land of abundance (milk and honey) and abomination. So was Deep Ellum. Described in the Dallas Gazette (a Negro weekly), "Deep Ellum is where Central Avenue empties into Elm Street, where Ethiopia reaches north her hand... The only place recorded on earth where business, religion, hoodooism, gambling and stealing goes on at the same time without friction..."

That was not entirely true. For Galilee Baptist Church, worship carried with it peril. According to **Leola King Davis**, youngest daughter of **Abraham Lincoln King**, one of Galilee's early pastors, "Honey, they use to throw bricks and bottles in that church."

It was Babylon, Niniveh and those famous twin cities of sin all rolled into to one. You name it, you could get it in Deep Ellum. Rev. Smith's sermons on spiritual things had to compete with the den of sidewalk vendors, mostly Eastern European Jews, bartering deals. You could get "Jitterbug Drape" model suites for \$3, 25 cents shoes, 50 cents dresses and 15 cents hats. At Honest Joe's (Goldstein), you could buy a "Deep Ellum Special"—a modified switch blade.

You could eat at the Blue Haven Cafe and "grow fat and healthy on home style food." Albert's Domino Parlor offered fried fish sandwiches up front, dice and bootleg booze in back. Down on Indiana Alley, there was always a steady stream of traffic moving in and out of the shadows of this red light district.



## **DEEP ELLUM: In the midst of Canaan**

At 189 Central, Galilee had a ring side seat to the "hottest" road shows. Across the track was "The Park" the "Harlem-style" theater that later became the famed Ella B. Moore. Blocks away was the Harlem Theater where hookey- shooting youths saw all the latest Hollywood films on the only silver screen for "coloreds".

As Saturday night rolled into Sunday, it wasn't uncommon to see long lines at the pawn shops as "Central Avenue Sheiks" sold back the suits on their backs for a third of the costs to get them through the week.

Chances are, they would buy the same suit back at full price the next weekend. As Galilee was preaching the warnings of Deuteronomy 18:9: "When thou art come into the land, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations", blues singer Blind Lemon Jefferson was preaching his own warnings:

*"Once I had a sweetheart,  
And she meant the world to me  
Till she hung around Deep Ellum  
Now she's not what she used to be."*

Such were the days and nights of a church in the midst of Canaan.



*Scenes from Deep Ellum: Top, Gypsy Tea Room. Bottom, Harlem Theater.*