

Journey to Elkhart: Daniel Parker and the Two-Seed -in-the-Spirit Baptists

June 8, 2016

About the time Independence was founded, a group of Baptist settlers migrated from Lamote, Ill., to Elkhart, Texas, led by Daniel Parker, a Baptist preacher and former state senator from Illinois. In 1833, it still was against the law for a Baptist church to be established in this Catholic territory. So, Parker's pioneers formed a church before they left their homes in Illinois. Then they traveled by wagon train to plant their new lives in Texas and begin what would become the oldest anti-missionary Baptist church to exist in the state.



Daniel Parker Charter members Daniel and Patsey Dickerson Parker, John and Phebe Parker, Sally Brown, and Julious and Rachel Christy met for the church's first worship service in Austin's Colony Jan. 25, 1834. Because of the threat of Mexican opposition, however, they moved northward to the Nacogdoches area, where the tiny congregation, still illegal, was further removed from notice.

The church was called the "Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Regular Pilgrim Primitive Baptist Church." It was similar to Primitive or "Hardshell" Baptists in that they did not support missionary, tract or Bible societies, Sunday schools or theological seminaries, because these are not listed

specifically in the Bible. Daniel Parker also was convinced of “Two Seedism,” the doctrine asserting that, since the time of Adam, mankind has been the bearer of two seeds—divine and evil.

During the Texas Revolution and Republic, from 1836 to 1845, the congregation met secretly. After Texas became a state, Parker and Elder Garrison Greenwood authorized the establishment of several churches throughout Texas, including congregations in Nacogdoches, Sabine, Liberty and Shelby counties. On Oct. 17, 1840, at Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church near Douglas, Parker led in the organization of the Union Primitive Baptist Association, the second Baptist association organized in Texas. He died in December 1844 and was buried in the Pilgrim Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery, two-and-a-half miles southeast of Elkhart.



On Feb. 19, 1848, a little more than two weeks after the Mexican-American War ended, church members voted to build a meetinghouse near the little cemetery where Parker was buried. His son, Caleb Parker, donated the land on April 17, 1852, and five years later, the church members built a one-room log cabin structure.

In 1890, a larger frame building replaced the log cabin and, in 1929, the congregation built a one-room brick meeting house. It still stands, along with a full-size replica of the cabin, raised in 1949, where the church once held its services. In September 1933, the Pilgrim Church celebrated its centennial.



The one-room brick meeting house was built by Elkhart's Pilgrim Baptist Church in 1929. (Photo / Dana Goolsby) Visit this church site and cemetery. Sit in the log cabin to sing an old hymn, pray or read a portion of Scripture aloud. Take a walk to note the names on the graves, the church cornerstone, the outdoor privy and the tributary below the bluff behind the church, where the new converts were baptized in Box Creek.

Directions:

South of Palestine from Elkhart, drive west on State Hwy 294.

At Farm Road 319 turn left; and at Farm Road 861 turn left again.

The church and cemetery are approximately 2.5 miles ahead.

For more information

- Read J. M. Carroll's *A History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas, Tx: Baptist Standard Publishing Company, 1923), pp. 45-50.
- Read Harry Leon McBeth's *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas, TX: BaptistWay Press. 1998), p. 22.
- See the Texas State Historical Association's *Handbook of Texas* site for a [Daniel Parker biography](#) and a brief history of [Pilgrim Primitive Baptist Church](#).
- The Pilgrim Predestinarian Regular Baptist Church of Jesus Christ Records, 1833-1847, 1869-1897, open for research use, are held at

the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of
Texas at Austin.