

## Churches in the Shenandoah Valley

Trinity Brethren Church  
Dry Run Road  
c/o Fort Valley Museum, P. O. Box 32,  
Fort Valley, VA 22652



### A brief History

Sometime in the 1830s or 1840s, Fort Valley's congregation of German Baptist Brethren was organized and met in either the old Union Church at the Cross Roads or the Brick Church at Dry Run. In 1871, the Fort Brethren—or Dunkards, as they were called—built the Oak Hill Brethren Meeting House on land donated by Elder William Peters. Circuit-riding preacher S. A. Shaver served as the minister. As the congregation grew in the 1870s and 80s, "the seeds of discord were being sown." Mirroring a dispute within the parent Brethren Church in America, Oak Hill members argued over whether they should

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remain conservative and plain in their dress and worship, or whether they should be more progressive and modern.

In 1883, Elder E. B. Shaver, pastor Samuel Shaver's younger brother, led the more progressive-minded members to split from the Oak Hill Church and start their own church. By 1902, this group of Progressive Dunkards numbered well over 100; two years later, they built the Trinity Brethren Church. Morgan Ritenour headed the building project, and Samuel Coverstone crafted the pews. E. B. Shaver continued to minister to the church, which in 1912 had 123 people on its rolls.

In 2008, when Trinity Brethren closed its doors and gave its property to the Fort Valley Museum, it had a very small membership and was affiliated with the Conservative Grace Brethren Churches International.

*Submitted by Meg Trott, October, 2012*

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