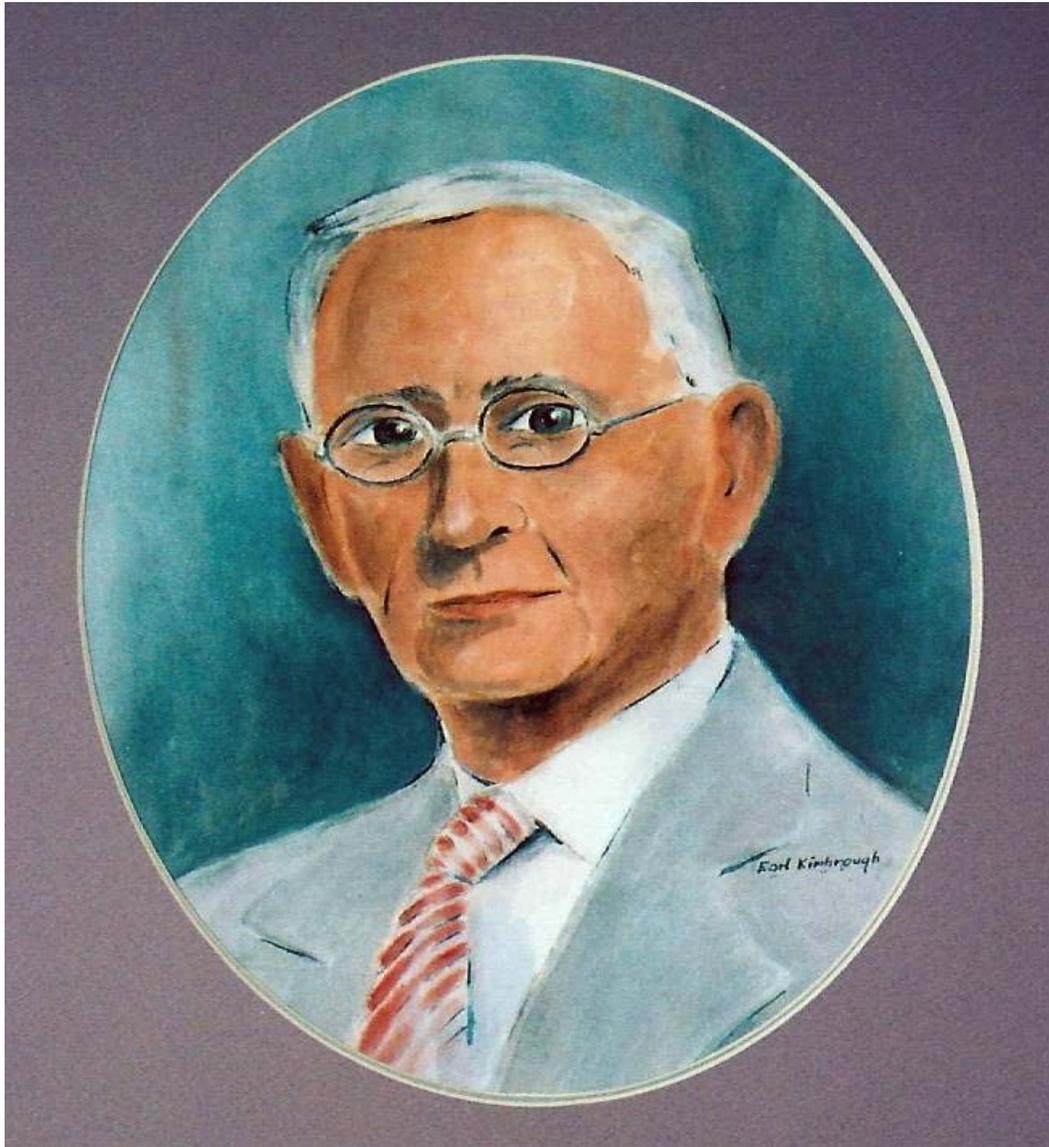


The Alabama Restoration Journal

An Historical Perspective of Churches of Christ In Alabama



FILO BUNYAN SRYGLEY
1859-1940

VOLUME 1

ISSUE 2

March 01, 2006

A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

The object of The Alabama Restoration Journal is to preserve and disseminate an historical record of the Restoration Movement primarily as it functioned in Alabama prior to World War II.

Brotherhood controversies as they unfolded in the years following this period are not included in this history, not because they lack historical validity, but because they do not fall within the frame of our primary time and area of coverage and because our interest is basically in our common roots.

Some articles and items may extend beyond our borders of state and time period, when the editor deems them pertinent to the main objective, when they are reflective of, or connected directly with, earlier history, or when they are purely of a human interest nature.

The Journal is not a "church paper" and is not designed to teach doctrine as such. It will not promote any hobby, controversy, or theological point of view that does not fall within the scope of the Restoration ideal within the time and area of primary interest.

The editor and contributing editors are responsible for keeping the material they submit for publication, whether written by them or selected from other sources, in keeping with the objects of The Journal.

The editor will retain the right to make the final determination of whether an article, or a portion thereof, fits the objective of The Journal.

No editing of material, other than routine editorial work, will be made on any writer's work without his prior knowledge and consent.

All historical material submitted for publication must be verifiable by documentation. Any opinions or conclusions based in part or whole upon supposition, while valid, will be given as such and not as historical facts.

Simple documentation may be supplied within the articles published, but it will be our purpose generally to omit footnotes.

The editors may not agree on all aspects of New Testament Christianity as currently practiced, but they have a common interest in Restoration history that transcends other differences, hold one another as brethren in Christ, and consider each other as committed to and capable of representing the Restoration ideal of speaking where the Bible Speaks and being silent where Bible is silent.

The writing of a particular story or the recording a particular event should be understood as reflecting the editor and associate editors perception of history and not necessarily as reflective of their own personal view.

Every effort will be made by the editor and writers to record history as it is and not to rewrite it as they might like for it to be. Historical revisionism is not the object of The Journal and will be excluded to the extent of our ability.

Source information for all articles will be available for those who request same.

The Editors

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

We hope to have an announcement concerning the Historic marker for Alabama Christian College Of Berry in our next issue with the full story...**LEW**

Our Cover

The painting that graces our cover this issue is a portrait of the lamented F.B. Srygley, done by our own Earl Kimbrough. Be sure and read the tributes to Srygley in this issue. He was truly a man of God.....**LEW**

The Alabama Restoration Journal

An Historical Perspective of churches of Christ in Alabama

"Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is," Jer 6:16



Editor

Larry E. Whitehead

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Earl Kimbrough

C. Wayne Kilpatrick

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March 01, 2006

Frank Richey

Scott Harp

EDITORIAL

Recently, it was my privilege to visit the cemetery where the beloved John Taylor is buried. As I stood before his tombstone, reading the beautiful epitaph written thereon, I could not help but think of the hardships and the persecutions this noble and humble servant suffered over a lifetime of serving the cause of the Blessed Saviour in Alabama and Mississippi. Tears came to my eyes as I stood there in this beautifully quiet cemetery on a hilltop in Franklin County. I could almost see this Godly man as he walked to, or rode a mule to, his next preaching appointment and of his reported habit of carrying his Bible under his hat to protect it from the elements. I also thought of the thousands of souls touched by his lifetime of preaching the gospel of Christ. I truly felt as if I was standing on hallowed ground. It was an emotional moment for me.

The many stories about Taylor and his life are legendary. The struggles he must have had in studying himself out of Calvinism and into the light of the New Testament Gospel with out ever hearing of Alexander Campbell or Barton W. Stone or the church of Christ is one of almost unbelievable inspiration to this writer. We, who have been so fortunate, to have had the benefit of Godly parents and teachers to instruct us in the truth, can only imagine the struggle this must have been for young Taylor. He succeeded and became one of the most beloved and powerful proclaimers of the word this State has ever known. We can only guess the number of congregations he established and the multitudes he taught the truth of the wonderful Gospel of Christ.

Later, I visited the Old Rock Creek church in the community where the Srygley family lived in the long ago. I was reminded of the following tribute to the Srygley Brothers by *Bro Asa M. Plyler* upon his visit to the old Srygley home in 1945. *"As my mind wandered back for more than three quarters of a century, in fact, I could see a bunch of children playing about the house, gathering hickory nuts, and climbing saplings and running up and down the banks on the side of the road. And among that group I fancy I can see two little boys dressed in home spun britches and shirt. Then I think of these two boys a few years later when they had become strong robust men, and I see them as they go out over the country to sow the seed of the kingdom; I view them as they travel from state to state with the whole world as the field; proclaiming the ancient gospel telling the sweetest story ever told. I watch them as they toil through the heat and through the cold; till I see one fall by the wayside, the whole brotherhood is made to weep; a valiant soldier of the cross has laid down his sword,*

and crossed to the other side. I view the other as he continues in battle, wielding the sword of the spirit, with all his might, until by and by he passes his mile stone three scores and ten, with his head white with the frost of many winters his face wrinkled with the weight of the passing years, his large hands that have helped to point thousands to the lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, have lost a little bit of their firm and steady grasp and have become a little shaken as the body becomes older and the labors of life have been piled up higher; until he to lays down the sword; to join his beloved brother on the other side, of the glad eternity. But nothing that we can say would be a tith of a worthy tribute to the work of these two men of God, (Fletcher and Filo Srygley)." Asa M. Plyler

Men such as Taylor and the Srygleys are not born everyday. These were men who were driven to proclaim the truth to a dying and lost society. They were willing to pay the price and sacrifice their all in order to bring the gospel to the world. Their generation was special and I am made to wonder how many, and indeed if there are any, who are able to "fill their shoes" in our time. When I see the many problems that are facing the Lord's Church today, I am made to long for a John Taylor or a Srygley to step forward and reassure us all "that everything will be alright in the end."

I believe that I can speak for each of our writers when I say that we are honored to be able to chronicle a small part of the efforts of these and other great men and women of the Restoration Movement in Alabama. . . **LEW**



The Old Srygley Homeplace ca. 1940's, Rock Creek, Al.

In This Issue:

We open with an excellent article by *Frank Richey* about a Gospel Preacher who was sentenced to death by hanging. An intriguing story set during the Civil War it tells of the trials of our brethren during this the greatest of all American tragedies. The article is entitled “ **The Gospel Preacher From Lauderdale County, Alabama That was Sentenced to Death By Hanging.**” Under the *Pioneer Letters* column we have a letter written by *T.B. Larimore* about a baptism he performed in the dead of winter. We have titled the letter “**Cold As Ice.**” This should cause us to appreciate the modern comforts that we enjoy even more. An article by *Earl Kimbrough* entitled “**Did The Ladies Do Right?**” is included. Earl tells the story of the sisters in the old Cleveland church in Fayette County and their determination to have a gospel meeting. *Brother Kimbrough* also has another J.D. Tant story; “**Amber In The Meetinghouse;**” a lighthearted look at some of the early brethren and their problems with the noxious “weed.” Under the “*They Being Dead Yet Speaketh*” column, *Brother Kimbrough* writes a biographical sketch of another Old Soldier of The Cross, John Dale. He tells the story of this great old preacher as only Earl can, being himself a native of Franklin County, Alabama. He pays Dale the honor he deserves. *Brother Kimbrough’s* fourth article is taken from his recent book and is a touching account of a conversion in the mid 1800’s, just before the Civil War. This one will bring a tear to your eye. It is entitled “**Fifteen Miles From Heaven.**” *Larry Whitehead* writes an article on the history of one of Northwest Alabama’s oldest churches of Christ, the “**Old Berea church**” in Fayette County. “**Long Legs and Short Breeches**” is the title of an article about Tolbert Fanning’s early efforts at preaching the gospel, also by *Brother Kimbrough*. “**Other Things**” is a short reminiscence by *Chester Estes* involving the church at Winfield, Alabama. “**No 3 Months’ Notice**” by *Earl Kimbrough*, deals with the problems preachers are constantly faced with today as well as days gone by. *C. Wayne Kilpatrick* begins a series on the **history of the church in Northwest Alabama: Lauderdale, Colbert and Franklin Counties**. Bro. Kilpatrick is the most knowledgeable man available for this task. He carries us back to the very beginning of the movement in our State. The first article covers the time period until the Civil War. This is a must read for every serious student of Restoration History. We carry two articles of tribute to the lamented *F.B. Srygley* with a lead in by *Bro. Kimbrough*. Included in the tribute are articles by *H. Leo Boles* and *Price Billingsley*. We include two biographical pieces. The first by *Brother Scott Harp* on the much loved **Gus A. Dunn**. The second by *Brother Hoyt Houchen* on the life of “**Raccoon**” **John Smith**. In our last article, *Scott Harp*

tells the story of the introduction of the instrument at Midway, Kentucky in a piece entitled “**The Melodeon At Midway.**” *Uncle Isaac* opines about some of the silliness amongst the brethren and some of the new hymnals and we will have *The Final Say..LEW*

News And Notes

The premiere issue was well received. Your comments are appreciated more than you know. Some have made suggestions for improvements to the publication. We have heard you and as you can see, we have made some changes. This is the first time around the block for your editor. Be patient. We are learning. It is our goal to make the Journal as informative and, yes, entertaining as we possibly can. With your help, we will succeed.

While we are grateful for your support, we still need more subscriptions. You can help in this effort by telling your friends about the Journal. We have ordered an additional printing of the first issue. If you would care to send us a list of those you believe would have an interest, please send or e-mail or call and we will forward a copy, free of charge. We especially would like to see our younger members become regular readers. We believe in the old adage that “*If you don’t know your history, you are bound to repeat it.*” Our young people are the leaders of tomorrow. Some of our older readers might want to consider subscribing for a son or daughter or grandchildren or a student. We realize that history is not the favorite subject of everyone, and everyone is not as thrilled by the stories of the old pioneers as those who write them. Every member of the Lord’s church should know enough about those who laid the groundwork for us, to have an appreciation for their efforts. They need to know their history.

In future issues we plan on covering the history of the movement in the entire state. We will concentrate on the Northern section first because that is the area in which the movement had the greatest impact early on.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the men who write for the paper. Frank, Earl, Wayne and Scott all are engaged in full time work. All are gospel preachers and teachers who take the time from their busy schedules to research and then compile the information into a readable article. I think they do a marvelous job. Of course I’m prejudiced. In a future issue, we will carry a biographical sketch and a picture of each one. One of them made the comment that “that might cause a mass cancellation.” I doubt that. They are all good men and I have gained an appreciation for their knowledge and their love for the Lord’s church. Also a big thank you to Hilda Logan for her tireless efforts in handling the subscriptions and the other things that we call on her for*LEW*

THE GOSPEL PREACHER FROM LAUDERDALE COUNTY, ALABAMA, THAT WAS CONDEMNED TO DEATH BY HANGING

Frank Richey

Mansil Matthews was one of the great gospel preachers of the nineteenth century. He was born December 29, 1806 in Kentucky and then moved to Tennessee, where his youth was spent. In the 1820's, Mansil moved to Lauderdale County, Alabama, where he



came under the influence of several members of the church of Christ. Matthews said, "I confessed my Savior and was buried with him in baptism by brother John Mulkey in Spring Creek, Franklin County (now Colbert County), Alabama, in 1823" and "commenced publicly proclaiming His cause in 1825." Mansil Matthews studied dentistry and medicine, but his first love seemed to be preaching. His

early labors brought him in close association with Barton Stone, Walter Scott, John T. Johnston, "Raccoon" John Smith, John Mulkey, John Newton Mulkey, Ephriam D. Moore, and Thacker Griffin. Immediately after his conversion, Mansil Matthews began to preach, and following the example set by Alexander Campbell (whether consciously following Campbell we do not know), he never accepted pay for his preaching. He had other plans. He went to Kentucky, studied medicine, and became a recognized physician. All his life he engaged in both medicine and preaching. Dr. Matthews preached for the Waterloo church of Christ in Lauderdale County, Alabama when at home, but was often away with Benjamin Lynn D'Spain in protracted meetings. Much of their meeting work was done in Western Tennessee, where, perhaps, they first came in contact with David Crockett who was a former member of the U. S. House of Representatives and was one of the most prominent and popular people in America. Crockett was "hankering" to go to Texas and fight in the Texas War of Independence.

Texas was the new "Promise Land" of the 1830's, just as Alabama had been after the turn of the century. Many Alabamians were interested in Texas. Perhaps the land along the Tennessee River at Waterloo had lost its productivity by the annual flooding of the river, or perhaps repeated crops had just worn out the land. The idea of vast expanses of land that could be had at a cheap price was enticing to many members of the church of Christ in Waterloo. Crockett was persuaded to serve as guide for the members of the church of Christ in Waterloo, Alabama, as many, if not most of them, decided to go to Texas. The church at that time is estimated to be about 300 members. This estimate is based on the order of 300

songbooks ordered by the church at Waterloo in 1832 from Barton W. Stone. (*Christian Messenger*, p. 380, 1832) This was probably one of the largest churches of Christ in the world at that time. In the fall of 1835, the expedition left Alabama to make the trip to Texas. This church has been referred to in history books as the "church on foot, on wheels and on horseback." The group from Waterloo, Alabama, moved too slowly for David Crockett. The church from Waterloo had, of course, women, children, and animals, which slowed the western movement. No doubt the group also refused to travel on the "first day of the week" because it was a day of worship and rest. Perhaps for these reasons, and Crockett's desire to get to Texas as fast as he could, Crockett left the church members in Memphis and hurried to Texas only to be killed at the Alamo in March of 1836.

Dr. Mansil Matthews and Benjamin Lynn D'Spain led the church from Memphis, Tennessee (where Crockett left them) to Texas. The church arrived in Red River County on January 17, 1836, and settled in Clarksville and then near Nacogdoches, where the first church of Christ in Texas came into existence. After settling his family and winning the March 17 election as representative from Red River County to the First Texas Congress, Dr. Mansil Matthews joined the Texas army and served as a surgeon until July 1836. He was at the battle of San Jacinto and attended the wounded General Sam Houston when Houston's soldiers brought General Antonio López de Santa Anna to Houston as a captive. One of Benjamin Lynn D'Spain's brothers, Randolph D'Spain, joined the Texas army and was killed in the massacre at the Battle of Goliad, when General Santa Anna ordered the execution of 400 captives.

For almost thirty years, Dr. Matthews served as a preacher in Texas. However, the Civil War brought new problems for Dr. Matthews. Mansil Matthews opposed secession, and being a union sympathizer in a Confederate State, made Dr. Matthew a very unpopular man. In 1864, while traveling in a caravan, Dr. Matthews was arrested on charges of treason and arraigned before the "high vigilance committee" in Gainesville, Texas. This committee was notorious and had already hanged a great number of men for treason. This committee, formed to break up a "Unionist Peace Party Plot" aimed at revolt against the Confederate government in Texas, was discovered in September 1862. Prompt action by local authorities broke up the organization in October 1862. Following a declaration of martial law in Cooke County, a "Citizens Court," or jury, of twelve men composed of army officers and civilians was formed at Gainesville. It found thirty-nine of the participants guilty and sentenced them to be hanged for conspiracy and insurrection. Three

other prisoners, who were members of military units, were permitted trial by court martial, as they requested and were subsequently hanged by its order.”

This committee, no doubt knowing that Dr. Mansil Matthews was a “union sympathizer”, held court and found Dr. Matthew guilty of treason and sentenced him to die by “hanging from the neck until dead.” E. M. Daggett, from Fort Worth, heard about this matter and traveled to Gainesville to plead for Matthews’ life. He told the court that “Matthews mind may be with the North, but his heart is with the South.” Evidently persuaded, the court commuted the death sentence to three days in jail, but instructions were given that Matthews not be told of the court’s decision. This obviously was done for one purpose only; that Matthews might suffer for three more days, knowing in his heart that he would be hanged. Matthews had received the death sentence and was certain that it would be carried out. Daggett, who thought the portion of the new verdict, the part about not telling Matthews that his life would be spared, was not right, sought a way to let Matthews know that his life had been spared. Daggatt asked to see Matthews. He was told he could in the presence of a guard, but was not to tell Matthews that his life had been spared. When brought to Matthews’ cell, Daggett began a lengthy discussion about the Bible, which soon caused the guard to become inattentive. Daggett then asked Matthews to quote his favorite Bible verse, and Matthews asked Daggett to do the same. Daggett replied, “*Fret not thy gizzard and zizzle not thy whirligig; thy soul art saved.*” Matthews immediately realized that his sentence had been commuted, but was afraid to show any emotion so that the guard might notice him. He just looked at the floor and trembled.

Dr. Mansil Matthews survived the ordeal and lived on until 1891. In 1888, three years prior to his death, Dr. Matthews returned to Lauderdale County, Alabama where he had begun his preaching in 1825, and while there wrote a letter to David Lipscomb. In this letter, printed in the August 22, 1888 issue of the *Gospel Advocate*, he mentioned his early labors and how things had changed over the sixty-five years of his preaching. Speaking of the old pioneer preachers, Matthew writes, “*We went and labored without the hope of earthly reward. Our lives were freely spent expecting our reward beyond the cold river.*” He spoke of the difficulties in the old days when pioneer preachers wore copperas or jeans, tread down grass and swam water courses for the love of truth. He lamented that these old pioneer preachers now had to “*stand aside as the young and stylish preachers with hair parted in the middle, sporting a massive chain, charm and diamond ring, were now the ones fit to advocate the cause of Christ.*” Also in this letter, the eighty-one-year-old Matthews said to David Lipscomb, “*Your position Bro. L.*

is right. May the Lord bless and lengthen your days to battle for His truth.” Matthews also spoke against a current departure from the faith, which he referred to as “*sanctified common sense calculated to destroy the labors of the glorious cause of Christ.*” Perhaps this is a reference to the current turmoil in the church over the use of a musical instrument in worship. This was a hot issue at that time.

Matthews’ first wife died at Thornton, Texas in 1870, and in 1872 he married Margaret Spencer, with whom he had four children. During the last twenty years of his life, he lived in Wise County where he bought and sold land, preached, practiced medicine, and operated a drugstore in Paradise, Texas with his son. He lived in Paradise for ten years and died there on April 13, 1891. Through his grandfather, Walter Matthews, Mansil was a descendent of Oliver Cromwell. His cousins, Joseph W. and James E. Matthews (brothers), were governor and auditor of Mississippi, respectively. James E. Matthews was a gospel preacher in Lauderdale County, Alabama and preached in the Bartons community, about ten miles from Waterloo, Alabama, where Mansil practiced medicine and preached. (James E. Matthews baptized Tolbert Fanning after Fanning responded to a sermon preached by B. F. Hall on Cypress Creek in Lauderdale County, Alabama in September 1826.)

Bad things can happen to good people. This is evident from the scriptures as we look at the lives of the apostles. It is also evident from the history of the protestant reformation, when many were persecuted for their belief in God. Dr. Matthews’ story is just another in a long list of stories of good people who suffered wrong as they went about trying to do good.

Notice the words of the apostle Peter: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth.” (1 Peter 2:21-22)



“COLD AS ICE”

We take the comforts that we have today for granted, forgetting that “ it was not always so.” We have heated baptisteries ,heated and air conditioned buildings with all the comforts that we can afford. The following is an account of a baptism that took place in the depths of winter. The account is taken from a letter written by the venerable T.B. Larimore..Brrrr...lew

Last night when we got to the water, we found that no one had cut the ice. There seemed to be a misunderstanding al ‘round. Not withstanding men could walk on the ice, the ground had thawed on top, it had rained a little, was very dark and very muddy, the sloppy mud resting on a firm foundation of frozen earth. Finally, after we had stood there from twenty to thirty minutes, “they” succeeded in beating, with a long, heavy piece of timber, room through the ice for the baptizing. The lady who was to be baptized, had on old, leaky shoes; hence, of course, her feet were wet from walking and standing in the mud-mud almost as wet as water, nearly as cold as ice. Some one went after a rake, returned and reported : “no rake.” Finally, however, a rake was secured: ‘The broken ice was raked to right and left, till it was possible for the baptizing. to be done.



T. B. Larimore

In the mean time, the little woman who was to be baptized was not the least bit nervous; but she was afraid “they” would insist on postponing the baptism. She was as calm, from the moment she stepped out of the mud into the water, as if she had been in the most pleasant place in the world-never nervous She said, “The water doesn’t seem to be very cold.” As we went down into the water, I said: “I’ll take good care of you” She said: “The Lord will take care of me.” I said, “Yes, he’ll take care of us both.” It was. not the slightest trouble to get her into proper position and depth of water. As I lowered her, into the cold grave, the broken ice naturally closed over her, so that she was literally covered over-the grave filled-with ice The mass of broken ice over her must have been many inches thick. As I raised her. up, she said,“O,I’m so glad !” Talking and praising God in a low, soft, sweet voice, she “came. up out of the water,” pushing the great blocks of ice out of her way.

When she reached the bank; loved ones hastened to wrap her up as quickly and completely as possible; but, when they betrayed some anxiety about her, she said: “I’m

not cold at all.” She never complained of the least unpleasant sensation. She had to be up nearly all night with her baby boy and little girl, hence, slept scarcely any; but she is bright, cheerful and happy. today, hasn’t had pain or an ache, and though her “throat trouble” seemed to be chronic-had lasted so long that she and loved ones feared so, at least-she declares her throat is perfectly well. She says: “Dark as last night was, it was the brightest night of my life.” Her’s was certainly as disagreeable. and as delightful a baptism as I have ever witnessed. (*Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore, Volume II, pages 59,60:*

Courtroom Logic

There was once a time when our brethren were respected by the denominations because of their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. They were known as students of the Word, or a storehouse of Bible knowledge. The feeling among many of the denominations was “You don’t want to get into a discussion with a Campbellite because they are ‘Walking Bibles.’”

Hence, when court was being held at the local courthouse, witnesses were sworn to speak the truth, by placing his or her hand on the Bible, and swearing to tell the truth.

J. Foy Guin, a Christian and an attorney from Russellville, Alabama, told of an incident in which a witness was being sworn and a Bible could not be located on which the witness could place his hand.. The Judge called for a member of the Church of Christ, whom he knew, and knew him to be a devout Christian, to come forward and instructed the bailiff to have the witness to place his hand on his head, instead of the Bible, because the Judge said his head was full of Bible knowledge and his life was exemplary, he would be an adequate replacement.

What a commentary on our brethren of a bygone era!

Hilda Logan

Matter Of Fact

The old country preacher was engaged in a heated discussion with an avowed atheist. The discussion centered on the account of Balaam’s ass. Said the atheist, “ The idea of an animal speaking is proof that this is nothing but a fairy tale.” Said the old Brother, after careful thought, “ It’s just as easy for me to believe that an ass could speak like a man as it is to believe a man can speak like an ass.”.....**LEW**

DID THE LADIES DO RIGHT?

Earl Kimbrough

In a letter to F. B. Srygley, telling a little about the Cleveland church in Fayette County, Alabama, Chester Estes told of a time when the sisters “vetoed” a decision of the elders. Gus Nichols (1892-1975), a native of Walker County who had been preaching about ten years, was invited by the church to hold a protracted meeting. This was in about 1925 while the old log meetinghouse yet stood. A few days before time for the meeting, the brethren decided that, in view of the poor prospects of a crop, they were not ready for a meeting and could not support a preacher in such an effort. So they wrote a letter to Nichols telling him not to come.

The letter was placed in the mail box for the carrier, but then a strange thing happened. Estes said: “The ladies of the church took the letter out of the box.” They disagreed with the men’s decision and took matters into their own hands, without informing them of their action. So the letter was not delivered and only the ladies of the church knew it. Thus Nichols came and the church had “one of the



Gus Nichols

greatest meetings” in its history. Asa Plyler says that after two days the building could not seat the crowds and services were held out doors. “The meeting lasted ten days, twenty-five became obedient to the gospel, [and] twelve erring members rededicated their hearts to the Lord.” (A. M. Plyler, *Historical Sketches of the Churches of Christ in Alabama.*) This moved the brethren to erect a new meetinghouse.

After relating this incident, Estes asked Srygley: “Did the ladies do right?” Srygley wrote a long reply to Estes’ letter, reciting some interesting facts about the history of the earlier preachers in Northwest Alabama, but he said not a word about the ladies. (*Gospel Advocate*, Sept. 3, 1936.) Whatever he might have thought about their defiant and covert action, he might have conceded that they were probably right about two things. The fact that the brethren were “not ready” for a meeting shows that they needed one, and the fact that they decided to build a new place to worship shows that they had more money than they admitted.

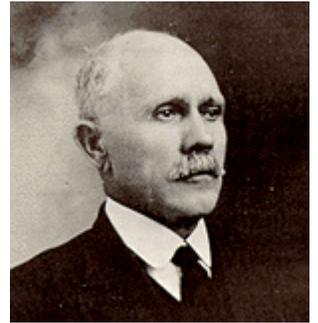
Srygley might also have noticed that as women are to “keep silent” in the church, the sisters at least had scripture for not telling what they had done.

AMBEER IN THE MEETINGHOUSE

Earl Kimbrough

Tobacco was not a cash crop grown on Northwest Alabama farms, but many of the area’s farmers managed to raise a few stalks to supply their need, with perhaps a little extra. Also the crossroads and small town stores, as well as the “rolling stores” that canvassed the backwoods, kept a supply of factory processed chewing tobacco and snuff on hand. So the tobacco users, including members of the church of Christ, were rarely lacking a plug or can for frequent use. Not even the services of the church were immune.

Tobacco users never had a more dedicated antagonist than J. D. Tant. Asa Plyler recalled that he preached “quite a bit” in Walker County, holding meetings at Oakman, Dixie Springs, and Parrish, where there were an abundance of tobacco addicts for him to work on. Plyler admired Tant and highly praised his “power in the pulpit.” He said much of



J.D. Tant

Tant’s preaching was to the church and that “he spared no words in reproofing brethren of their sins.” This was especially true when he was on the case of the tobacco users. “He felt that the church house, although just a meeting place for the church, should be as comfortable and neat as it could reasonably be had.” This led to Tant’s rebuke of some tobacco buffs who were abusing the meetinghouse with their ambeer.

Plyler writes: “In one of his meetings [Tant] noticed that some of the brethren who always sat in a certain place, at the side of the building...made use of the side of the wall and the floor to spit their tobacco. There was a great splotch on the wall and the floor. One day when he arose to begin his lesson, after addressing the audience, he said, ‘I notice that some of you ungodly brethren have spit your tobacco juice all over the side of the house and the floor. Now brethren that looks nasty, and you ought to be ashamed of that mess you have made there. Now if you ungodly brethren have just got to chew that nasty stuff, when you get to the church door lay your chew down on the doorsteps while you are in church. I will guarantee you that it will be there when you get out because there is not a dog in town that will touch it.’” (A. M. Plyler, *Historical Sketches of the Churches of Christ in Alabama.*)

Larry Whitehead of Pinson, Alabama, thinks this episode took place in the church at Parrish.

Eight thousand people! A veritable army, yet all baptized by one man." These words introduced a feature article published in the Birmingham News in the early part of the twentieth century the reporter told about an aged gospel preacher then living in the little community of Vina, among the mountains of Northwest Alabama in Franklin County. The preacher, John H. Dale, at that time was a hundred and five years old. Few people today, and few then, ever heard tell of him, yet, he was a remarkable man.

Dale was born in Ireland on November 25, 1822. He came to America when he was a young man and settled in Illinois, most likely in the 1830s. Although a Roman Catholic from early life, he came in contact with the Restoration work of Barton W. Stone, learned the way of the Lord more perfectly, and was baptized by Stone soon after arriving in this country. Stone had moved to the Prairie State from Kentucky in 1834 and made his home at Jacksonville, a few miles west of Springfield. Illinois was then on the frontier of the westward expanding United States and still referred to as "the far west" by those who lived on the Atlantic Seaboard.

While living in Illinois, Stone, in keeping with his custom, gave much of his time to preaching tours. However, he suffered a stroke in the summer of 1841, which left him crippled in body and limited in preaching for the remaining three years of his life. He was no longer able to travel as he had since beginning his reformatory work in 1801. It was evidently some time just prior to his stroke when Stone came into contact with, taught, and baptized John Dale. The young Irishman could hardly have been more than eighteen at the time.

A few years after his conversion, Dale began preaching the primitive gospel and, like Stone, spent much of his time in the evangelistic field. Both the scope of his ministry and the means by which he supported himself are unknown. But he traveled extensively, and in 1860, made a trip to "the Holy Land," a very rare and expensive venture in that day. This was nearly twenty years before J. W. McGarvey's well-known trip to the region where people of the Bible walked. McGarvey told about his journey in Lands of the Bible (1881). In his old age, Dale especially enjoyed recounting his own visit to Palestine.

John Dale's labors as a gospel preacher continued for more than sixty years. In fact, it was not until he was near ninety-five that he felt that his strength was not up to the task and "resigned" from evangelizing. His career apparently included many activities, but his main interest was the gospel. In baptizing more than eight thousand people, he accomplished a feat comparable to several of the most successful Restoration preachers of the nineteenth century. Dale had been married and had two

children, but his wife died soon after the War Between the States and he remained a widower. It is not known what became of his children, but it is likely, in view of his age, that he simply outlived them.

Dale for some reason came to Vina, a station on the Illinois Central Railroad, around 1913. He was then ninety-one and near the end of his ministry. Several years later, his resources gone and his physical strength abating, he went to the courthouse in Russellville, Alabama, to seek admission to the county poorhouse.

Thomas H. Roberson, a town banker and an elder of the Russellville church of Christ, heard about Dale and the nature of his presence at the county seat. Roberson went to see him and, after talking with the aged brother told him that a man who had done as much as he had for the cause of righteousness should not spend his last days in the poorhouse. Roberson made Dale's plight known to the Russellville church and the members gladly undertook his support. With the help of a few individuals, the congregation clothed, boarded, and otherwise looked after his needs for the last seven years of his life. Records of the Russellville church, at least for 1923-1927, show contributions in various amounts paid to "Bro. Dale, including \$2.50 for a pair of glasses. During this time, Dale lived with the family of Ellie L. Reed, in Vina.

Notwithstanding his advanced age, the old veteran's mind remained active and he retained a bit of Irish wit in his conversation until the end. His death came December 10, 1927, and he was buried in a cemetery near the place where he spent the last fourteen years of his life. Van A. Bradley, then living in Phil Campbell, Alabama, helped by W. R. Wilcutt of Fulton, Mississippi, conducted his funeral. It was given to "Bro. Dale" to sojourn on earth a hundred and five years and two months. How interesting it would be to know more fully the story of his abundant life.

Dale's scant history reminds us of thousands like him, who spent their lives laboring obscurely in the Lord's vineyard and whose bones rest in long forgotten graves; but their history does not end there for their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life.*Earl Kimbrough*

REMEMBERING BROTHER DALE

When I first began a serious study of Restoration history, an uncle, Brisco Kimbrough, told me about an old gospel preacher who lived in Franklin County, Alabama, in the early part of the twentieth century. He could not remember his name, or much about him, except that he had seen him in the services at the Russellville (Washington Avenue) church of Christ and that the church provided financial support for him during the last years of his life. Chester Stout, a long time elder of the church, also told me about

an old preacher who was over a hundred years old who preached at Russellville. He said the old man sat in a chair and preached a sermon on the conversion of Saul, but he did not remember the preacher's name. These were my first inklings that such a man as John H. Dale had ever lived. I thought no more of it until I came across the old preacher's name several years later.

In the 1960s, while reading musty copies of the *Franklin County Times* in the basement of the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, I came across the reprint of an item from the *Birmingham News* about John H. Dale. The heading read: "Venerable Gentleman, 104, Has Baptized Eight Thousand." Thomas H. Roberson, an elder in the Russellville church, had sent a clipping of the item, along with some comments, to the county paper. He also sent a copy to the *Gospel Advocate*, where it was published September 1, 1927. Later that year, an obituary of Dale by Van Bradley of Phil Campbell, Alabama, appeared in the *Advocate*. Bradley, along with W. R. Wilcutt of Fulton, Mississippi, preached Dale's funeral. It was from these sources that I wrote an article about John H. Dale that was published in the January 2002 issue of *With All Boldness*.

The article told about Dale, who was born in Ireland and came to America in early life. He came in contact with Barton W. Stone and was baptized by him when he was probably about eighteen or nineteen years old. Stone was then living in the frontier village of Jacksonville, Illinois, having moved there in 1834, the year that Stephen A. Douglas took up residence there. Although age and intermittent illness slowed his activity, Stone continued making preaching tours until 1841 when he suffered a severe paralytic stroke. He died November 9, 1844. It is apparent that Dale's conversion occurred before Stone's stroke. Roberson said: "[Dale] soon became a preacher and traveled extensively. On one of his trips, in the early 'sixties,' he visited the Holy Land, and still enjoys recounting his experiences there. His work in the ministry continued for sixty years, during which he baptized more than eight thousand people. A few years ago, however, he felt his strength not equal to the task and resigned. Since then Mr. Dale has been making his home with Ellie L. Reed, in Vina. The Russellville Church of Christ is materially contributing to his welfare." (*Gospel Advocate*, Sept. 1, 1927.) Of the many articles I have written on Restoration history, none has given me greater satisfaction, or more spine-tingling delight, than the one about John H. Dale. This is not so much from the article itself, although it is a thrilling story, as it is from subsequent events. In a section of a Restoration web site he maintains, Scott Harp, preacher for the Fayetteville, Georgia, church of Christ, writes: "I came across an issue of *With All Boldness* in 2002 and noted the article by Earl Kimbrough on the life of John Dale. I had never heard of Dale, but it peaked my interest because my home of

Haleyville, Alabama is only about 40 miles from Vina where Dale had lived. Another thing that caused my interest to peak was that one of the elders of the Fayetteville Church of Christ where I preach grew up in Vina, Alabama, James Rickard."



Harp adds: "I called James to ask if he had heard of the old preacher. The response was that he remembered him, and that he had not heard that name in seventy years. He began investigating the location of the grave of Dale, along with any other information he could find. He contacted public records departments in Alabama, Kentucky and Illinois where he came across just a little information, most of which appears on this site. He ordered a copy of Dale's death certificate and saw that his own father, Nello Rickard, had signed it. This made this an even more personal connection for James to the old man of God." (**Scott Harp**, "Personal Reflections," *TheRestorationMovement.com.*, May 11, 2004.)

At the same web site, James Rickard gives a sketch of John Dale, in which he says: "I grew up in the little town of Vina. I was 7 years old when this great man, whom I remember as 'Old Brother Dale' died. My father, Nello Rickard, completed and filed his death certificate. I remember this grand old man who had a long, gray beard. Even though I was a child when I knew him, I consider it a distinct honor to have known such a great man who was baptized by Barton W. Stone, one of the very great giants of the Restoration Movement. It isn't likely that there are many other people living today who can claim such a distinct honor by saying that they personally knew someone who was baptized by Barton Stone." (Ibid.) I have corresponded, talked by phone, and visited with Brother Rickard. He recently sent me copies of all the information he had gathered about John Dale, including a copy of his death certificate. I have also talked by phone with Brother Harp. Unfortunately, at the end of 2003, Brother Rickard's wife Francis died and he, quite naturally, has had to make



painful adjustments in his life. As soon as he could, he resumed his interest in John Dale. He learned that he was buried in an unmarked grave in Old Burleson Cemetery in Franklin County, Alabama. At his own expense, Brother Rickard ordered the erection of an appropriate stone marker in memory of his boyhood friend, which is placed "at a wonderful location near the entrance drive" up the hill in the old cemetery. He also sent me pictures of the cemetery where the old pioneer is buried and of the marker he erected there. The inclusion of John H. Dale in Brother Scott's web site of deceased gospel preachers and the marker that Brother Rickard set up in his memory give evidence now that Brother Dale will not again be forgotten. The Web site contains several items including the article from *With All Boldness* that aroused the curiosity of Brother Harp, which in turn awakened a boyhood memory in Brother Rickard that had lain dormant for nearly three quarters of a century and resulted in the monument being placed near his grave site. The memorial stone reads: "JOHN DALE. NOV. 13, 1822. DEC. 10:1927. IN THIS CEMETERY THE BODY OF JOHN H. DALE LIES IN AN UNIDENTIFIED GRAVE. BORN IN IRELAND, HE CAME TO AMERICA AS A YOUNG MAN, WHERE HE MET AND WAS BAPTIZED BY BARTON W. STONE. HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND AS A GOSPEL PREACHER BAPTIZED ABOUT 8,000 PEOPLE DURING HIS LIFE. HE LIVED HIS LAST FEW YEARS IN VINA, ALABAMA."

I share with Scott Harp the sentiment he expressed in saying: "The outcome of this is that I know a man who knew a person baptized by Barton W. Stone [more than 160 years ago]. I say this is very unique." Several in my father's family and members of the Russellville church then living whom I knew also knew Brother Dale. I would only add to the uniqueness of this remarkable chain of events the thought that it may also have been providential. I am both grateful to God and personally pleased for the part I had in renewing and preserving the memory of John H. Dale, who was a living link in my lifetime to Barton W. Stone, when the old preacher was on the verge of being forgotten. I deeply appreciate the interest that Scott Harp and James Rickard took in this story that brought the monument at Old Burleson Cemetery to reality and placed the story of Brother Dale's life on Brother Harp's web site for all to see. Further, I am personally indebted to Pat Farish, the editor of *With All Boldness*, and to John Welch, the publisher, for their special interest in presenting and preserving Restoration history in general and for granting me the space in their journal that sparked the rediscovery of John H. Dale. In his remarks about Brother Dale, James Rickard thought-fully says: "As New Testament Christians living in 2004 we should consider these questions: Were it not for such spiritual giants as Barton Stone, Alexander Campbell, John Dale, and many others, what would be our spiritual relationship with God today? Would the New Testament church in all its primitive

splendor and glory exist in our great country today? Would there be a congregation of the Lord's people in the communities where we live today? Just think of the untold thousands of men and women who obeyed the gospel and whose souls are in paradise today because these great men worked so hard and sacrificed so much in restoring the church to what it was in New Testament times. Today, we are 'standing on the shoulders of giants' because of the efforts of these men. Truly, we owe them a great debt of gratitude. May the memory of these great men live on and on in the hearts and minds of New Testament Christians."

This is why John H. Dale deserves an honored place in our memory.*Earl Kimbrough*

Under Duress

I was in a gospel meeting in the old church building at Hackleburg, Alabama, where I held about six meetings in succession, when among others, a teenage girl made the confession. Her father who was a member of a denominational church, whipped her and told her that she could not be baptized. The time for the baptizing in Bear Creek was set for the next afternoon. Her father told her he would "double the dose" if she were baptized. It was said that out of remorse, he got drunk and left home. The little girl did not show up with the others to be baptized at the appointed time, and it was explained to us why she did not show up. But, in the meantime, while her father was away, she returned the next night to the services with her mother. Her mother made the confession that night also and I then baptized the mother and the girl.

Chester Estes – Faith That Overcomes

"Cousin Joe"

It was the year 1894. J.D. Tant was debating with a Baptist preacher named Joe Lockhart. Tant kept referring to his opponent as "Cousin Joe." Finally, Lockhart took exception and demanded to know why Tant kept using the appellation. Tant explained, "why, everybody knows that Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were cousins. I follow Christ; you follow John the Baptist. That makes us cousins, Cousin Joe.." *Vanguard*

The Colleges

"I wonder if people we baptize now know whether they are being added to the church or joining some college!"

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.



Uncle Isaac Sez

Saw in a bulletin the other day some preacher braggin 'bout their softball team.....Got to wondering if they had had ball teams in New Testament times, would they have had team mascots and catchy names...A few that come to mind...The Ephesian

First Lovers, The Smyrnan Prisoners,,Laodoceian Lukewarmers, The Pergaman Idolators, The Phillipian Preachers, The Corinthian Elders and She Elders for the women's teams, The Damascan Deacons and Deaconesses and of course the big church in Jerusalem, The Jerusalem Praise Teamers ...mmm...

Was reading Sister Hilda's story elsewhere in this issue, bout the Judge using one of the Brethren as a bible in court...sure would hate to have to find one that met that criteria today..'.....'Twould be might nigh impossible...Saw in a survey the other day where the average person spends 8 hours a day sleeping, 2 hours eating, one hour goin back and forth to work, 8 hours at work, 5 hours watchin TV...Don't see any time for the Lord or Bible study...All of which leads one to conclude "there ain't no walkin Bibles any more"...

Saw where a "one cup" congregation in Texas don't believe that baptism is scriptural unless it is performed in running water..... Speakin of the One Cuppers, I bet they don't have as many back benchers as the rest of us do....Think about it..You'll get it...fact is, I'm not sure the snuff dippers and tobacco chewers weren't responsible for multiple cups anyway... ..

Heard where some of the churches have replaced the Bible classes with "Lessons from Mayberry" Of course I know some members who remind me of Goober and Gomer..Know an Elder or two that could play Barney Fyfe and not miss a beat. Maybe a member or two that would fit the Earnest T. Bass mold...Know at least two song leaders that could play Howard Sprague and at least one who could be Otis...Where does it go from here, Folks?.....When do we get to see Dallas or NYPD..I'm sure there are some lessons to be learned from these shows too...Bout morals, corruption and such....I could stand a good John Wayne movie..Always had the good guys versus the Bad guys...Plus, I like cowboys.....Besides these folks are more life like than Paul, Silas, Barnabas and Peter and the boys....More macho don't you know?.....

Saw a discussion on TV between a "creationist" and an "evolutionist" the other day...Got me to thinking, if man evolved from apes and monkeys, why do we still have apes and monkeys?....Why not just take the Lord's word for it....Fact is, why not take the Lord's word for all the things he has told us to do without trying to find a loophole...Some of our own brethren need to learn this lesson....

See where one of our "Christian Universities" cancelled political columnist Ann Coulter's speech because some of the alumni complained that she was "mean spirited"..These folks would probably have had J.D.Tant or David Lipscomb hanged...What is a Bible school doing with a political writer or a politician on the

program anyway...Reminds me of the good ole boy braggin about his new grandson..Said if he was above average intelligence, they would send him to school to be a preacher of the gospel, If he was below average intelligence, they would send him to law school and if he was a total idiot, they would run him for Congress...

The congregation where we attend just bought new song books...Got over a thousand songs in it...Kinda like holding a J.C. Penney's catalog.. makes your arms tired.....bout half the songs are either camp songs, Christmas carols, Patriotic songs or old Black Spirituals....Tillit Teddlie, L.O. Sanderson and Austin Taylor, where are you?...Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, Indeed!.....Call me old fogey if you will..There has never been a more meaningful nor beautiful song than Sanderson's "Be With Me Lord", or Teddlie's "Worthy Art Thou" or Taylor's "Closer To Thee".....And certainly they are fitting for the worship service, which, lest we forget, is a solemn occasion not a "love in." Nor was it designed for so called "contemporary worship" or "Children's church."Almost sounds like "play church."....

Went to the singing at Diana, Tennessee awhile back and was thrilled to hear the old songs sung heartily by singers who obviously loved the Lord and were thrilled to glorify him in song...They literally raised the rafters....Saw many of the old song books from days gone by, some back to the early 1800's with songs written by some of the greats of the Restoration...

Speakin of singing, many of our Brethren are utilizing the so called "paperless hymnals"..where the words and music are projected on a screen..I'm just waiting til they start using the bouncing ball and then we can get rid of some of these terrible song leaders, or bring in Mitch Miller to train them...

See where some of our brethren are now referring to themselves as "The A cappella Churches of Christ"....As opposed to what? The non a cappella Churches of Christ!....Please, give me a break....Has it really come to this, folks?..Lipscomb and Sewell must be kicking the dirt off their graves....

See where one of the churches of Christ out West, is having a Rendezvous as opposed to a Gospel Meeting, I suppose...They were told to bring their skis and snowmobiles..Must be planning on some serious Bible study...

Seriously folks, the men and women the brethren are writing about in this Journal, gave their all in sacrifice and suffering to get us back to the "Old Paths." I sometimes think we have forgotten the legacy they left for us.. It seems we are rushing head long for the new paths or to be like everyone else.... As Brother Kilpatrick says "We are standing on the shoulders of giants."I always thought we were supposed to be different...Seems like I remember 2 Pet 2:9 saying something about "a peculiar people."....If the changes take place in the next few years as rapidly as it seems they are moving, we wont be able to recognize the Lord's church from all the rest of the religious groups around us and we will lose "our peculiarity..." and become just another denomination...Believe it...Our peculiarity is what makes us unique in the religious world....Believe it!....Til next time...Isaac

FIFTEEN MILES FROM HEAVEN

Earl Kimbrough

The following is the lead chapter in Brother Kimbrough's recent book, "Fifteen Miles From Heaven." We have had several requests to print the story in the Journal. It is a delightful and inspiring story that one never tires of reading again and again. We are glad to run it in this issue...lew

Eight years before the Civil War, Moses E. Lard kept a preaching appointment at Richmond, Missouri. As he hitched his saddle horse to a rail near the meetinghouse, a black man named Dick, a brother in Christ, approached him and introduced himself. He told Lard that he had once belonged to the church at a place called Stanley's, where "an old brother Jacob Warrinner" used to preach, and near which he was buried. But after the venerable preacher's death, the church had "gone to pieces," leaving Dick for a long time without its privileges. Yet, his faith in Christ remained steadfast. He told Lard: "I have come fifteen miles today to hear you preach and I have brought with me my young master, Thomas. He is a good boy; and I think he would be a Christian, if he knew how."

After being introduced to Dick's young master, Lard went into the meetinghouse to begin the services. He strongly believed in special providence and wondered if God had a hand in the presence of Dick and Thomas. The audience was large, but not a Christian there had come fifteen miles, a considerable distance in 1853. But here was a bond-servant who, after laboring hard all week, had traveled that far on the Lord's Day to attend the Richmond meeting.

Lard was thinking about Dick's words as he entered the pulpit to speak. "Thomas was in the congregation," he later recalled, "a circumstance I was determined not to forget for the next hour and a half." Through the long discourse, Lard steadily kept in mind "a plain, honest boy of sixteen." The simple sermon, deliberately delivered in "plowman's phrase" that had been Lard's early dialect, accomplished its mission. When the invitation was given, Thomas went forward, gave the preacher his hand, and confessed his *faith* in the Lord.

Lard described the scene, saying: "Poor Dick was as near Heaven then, as he will ever be again, till he reaches that blessed abode. He could not sit, he could not stand, he

did not shout, but clapped his hands; while tears ran over those toil-worn cheeks. He meekly occupied a distant corner of the house; and I felt, if angels delight to gather around the heart that is full of gratitude to Christ, surely they must have a strange pleasure in folding their wings in that corner just then." Thomas was baptized into union with Christ that same evening.

A little more than two weeks later, at the request of Dick and Thomas, Lard went to the community near their home to preach for two days in the shade of some large trees. There a modest speaker's stand and some crude seats had been erected to accommodate the services. Resolved to make the most of his limited time, Lard preached two and a half hours the first day to a large audience of "an honest, agricultural people, blessed with pertinent common sense and sound hearts." The sermon made a favorable impression on most of those present. The next day the audience, undiminished in size, gathered again to hear another equally long sermon from Lard. At the close, four men went forward to confess Christ. Excitement in the community grew to the point that Lard thought it unwise to leave the people in their present mood to keep another appointment. So he decided to stay a while longer.

The third day eight more precious souls confessed their faith in Christ. Before the meeting was closed, forty had been baptized for the remission of sins. And the scattered flock that remained of the old Stanley's congregation came to take their seats in the assembly of the saints. On the Lord's day, the happy brethren, both old and new, met at a convenient place a mile distant and resolved to be faithful in God's service. Lard said:

"A table was then spread, and on it were placed the emblematic loaf and cup. The supper was then eaten in memory of the Master, a song sung, and the services of the hour closed." (*Lard's Quarterly*, September 1867.)

The church established at that time, known as South Point, was in Ray County, Missouri. It came into existence because a chattel slave who was also a bond-servant of Christ, loved both of his masters enough to travel fifteen difficult miles to hear the gospel. That journey may have been the difference between heaven and hell for Thomas and for many others as well. Almighty God in the exercise of his providential rule very often uses what seems to us to be an insignificant act of faith to accomplish his purpose on earth.

Heaven indeed may be at times just "fifteen miles" away.

. "Fifteen Miles From Heaven"



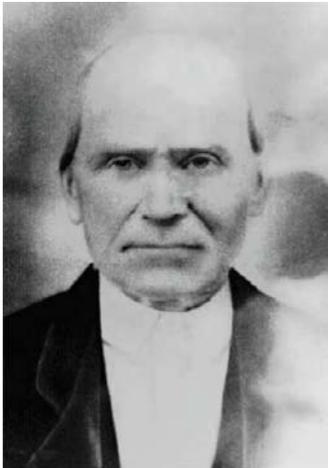
Moses Lard

OLD BEREA

Larry Whitehead

The meetinghouse of the Berea church of Christ in Fayette County, Alabama, has a plaque on the front of the building that states the church began in 1845. I believe this is in error and that the church actually began meeting some fifteen years earlier in 1830.

Recently we have been able to find several letters and reports to some of the brotherhood papers of an earlier time, written in the 1870's and 80's by Jeremiah and Lorenzo Randolph and later by their brother Simeon as well as the McCalebs, that verify some points that have been assumed but never confirmed about the conversion of the McCalebs and their relationship with the Randolph family as well as the beginnings of the Berea Church.. One of Jeremiah's letters confirms that his father Elisha Randolph , John Mulkey and other preachers were in Morgan County, Alabama as early as 1825 (This is some ten years earlier than most researchers believed the Gospel was preached in Morgan County).. They held several camp meetings and established two or three small congregations. One of these congregations was in the mountain community, South of Falkville and just across the line in what was Blount County and is today, Lacon, Cullman County, Alabama. This congregation was known as the Old Log Church. McCaleb family lore has it that Hugh's son in law, Robert Logan, was converted, likely at one of these camp meetings and consequently led the McCalebs and Lauderdale's to the truth, probably under the preaching of Elisha Randolph. This would fit with the family stories about their conversion. These families would likely have been members of the Old Log Church, as it was near their settlement..



John Taylor

In late 1829 or early 1830, Hugh White McCaleb led his family to what is today, Northern Fayette County and they all entered land in what came to be called the Berea Community. This move included the Logans, McCalebs and the Lauderdale's, Thomas and his Brother Robert. Their father, James Lauderdale and the rest of his family would follow the next year.

It must be assumed that they began meeting for worship services, either in Robert Logan's home or Hugh White McCaleb's home or possibly Thomas Lauderdale's, as soon as they were settled. John A. McCaleb, Hugh's oldest son ,soon began preaching and the Randolphs, Elisha and his son, Jeremiah, moving a short time later from Blount County and being settled nearby, would also

preach for the group. There is also strong evidence that John Taylor, who had been preaching for the Baptist and had recently studied himself into the New Testament Gospel, was living in the general area and associated himself with these families as they met. Taylor may very well have been a member of the Old New River Primitive Baptist church. The early rolls of the Baptists list a family of Taylors as early members.

L.D. Randolph, in an article in the *Gospel Advocate*, 1891, states that his father, Elisha Randolph was working with a small congregation in Fayette County and that “ *the beloved John Taylor, recently from the Baptists* ” was with them.” Randolph was off on his dates (he stated around 1841 and it is believed that Taylor moved to Franklin County by 1840.) This would have been Berea, as it was the only church of Christ in Fayette County.

Taylor, who would become one of the most important preachers in Northwest Alabama, continued his close association with the Berea church for the rest of his life, some fifty years. Taylor also is the subject of some controversy as to when the Berea church started. In a report to the *Gospel Advocate* in 1860, he stated that “*Berea was organized in 1859.*” I don't know how to correlate this statement with the other articles and reports that are included in this article. Taylor often reported that he had gone into a community and “re-organized” the church. Maybe the church had stopped meeting regularly or only met, as was the custom among many, when a preacher would come into the area to preach for them. He may have been referring to the new building that replaced the one from Stud Horse creek, or it could have simply been a misprint. Whatever the reason, the evidence is clear that the Berea church had been in existence long before Taylor's report in 1860. Brother Kimbrough will explore Taylor's involvement in a later issue.

Elisha Randolph moved his family to the area around 1832 and they settled near what is today the Fayette/Walker County line. His sons, Jeremiah, Lorenzo Dow and Simeon as well as his grandson, Virgil, would also play an important role for the next sixty years or so in the Berea Church.

The following statement signed by John McCaleb, Andrew McCaleb, A.C. McCaleb, Margaret McCaleb and J. Pinkney Whitehead, appeared in the *Millennial Harbinger of December 11, 1870*. “ *This is the oldest congregation of disciples in this region of country, has numbered over 100 members, some of us whose names are annexed have been Christians almost half a century, some have lived here (**emphasis theirs**) more than forty years, one an elder and preacher for more than a quarter of a century.*” This statement leaves very little doubt that the Berea Church had been in existence for forty years at the time this was written in 1870. This would make its

beginnings in 1830. *Avis Haney Lawrence*, great granddaughter of Andrew McCaleb, in her short history of



Andrew McCaleb

the Berea church, concurs that the Berea church was founded about 1830. In an interview with Avis several years before her death, she told this writer that she believed the original building was built in the late 1830's or early 1840's and that it was located about one mile west of the current building on Stud Horse Creek.

That building burned and the congregation built near the present building. That building too was destroyed and a third structure was built and stood until the current building was built in 1959. She believed, as does this writer, that the members met in private homes until a building could be built, probably about 1840.

All of this leads one to conclude that indeed, the Berea church was the first congregation to be established between Moulton and Tuscaloosa. It was located near the Old Byler road which ran from the Tennessee Valley to Tuscaloosa. The road literally opened this section of Alabama for those migrating South from Tennessee and Kentucky. In addition, a later road was built that ran from Russellville thru the Berea community and New River directly to Tuscaloosa. The above statement from the *Millennial Harbinger*, makes it even more clear that Berea was the only congregation in that part of the country and also reinforces the belief that the older McCalebs obeyed the gospel about 1825, in Morgan County.

Thomas Thornton, who married one of Elisha Randolph's daughters, Orpha, was appointed an Elder and likely John A. McCaleb also. (*the congregation met for a time in Thornton's home..lew*) John's younger brother, Andrew, would also serve in that capacity as would Simeon Randolph, Newman McCollum and John Tyler McCaleb among others. Early members would include the leading families of Northern Fayette County. In addition to the Hugh McCaleb family, the Robert Logan family, Lauderdale's, Thomas and his brother Robert, the Thomas Thornton family and a few years later the William Pickens Anthony's, the Isaac Perry family, the Joseph Whitehead family, Hollingsworths and others.

The church experienced steady growth over the next years. The following report was submitted to the *Gospel Advocate* 10/1867: *Elder J. Fanning, On last evening, I reached here from attending a meeting at Berea, some 35 miles east of this point in Fayette County. The meeting began on Friday night and continued until Thursday*

night, the result of which was 46 accessions; 36 by confession and baptism, 10 otherwise. It was indeed a triumph of Truth over ignorance and sectarianism, Bro. J. Randolph came to our aid and was the chief speaker. To the Lord be the praise for ever and ever and ever. Amen. Just three months later this report was submitted to the Gospel Advocate If there is a devoted brother in Tenn. seeking a field for ministerial labor, he can find it here. Should there be a preaching brother traveling the Byler Road. they will respectively be received at the church, Berea, five miles off the road west. The Brethren have well nigh completed a comfortable house for worship, at the place, framed 30 by forty feet. (This would have been the second building..lew)



Sallie Hackworth Morris

In this report to the Advocate the writer further stated that "*the brethren at this place meet regularly for worship, Bible classes and vocal music Worshippers now 110.*".. This would have been only two years removed from the Civil War during which the membership would have surely dropped and was during the time when the people of the community were destitute. To have this many members is amazing.

The Berea Church, at its peak, may very well have had over 200 members. In 1868 another meeting was held by Jeremiah Randolph, with twelve additions reported.

The Berea church's reputation and influence spread throughout the region. In 1859 a large cooperation meeting was held at Berea. Delegates from churches all over Northwest Alabama attended, some from as far away as the Stoney Point church in Lauderdale County, the Russellville church, the church at Moulton and several others. The purpose of the meeting was to raise funds to put evangelists in the field to preach in hard pressed areas. This was accomplished and the next meeting (1861) was to be held in



Matt Hackworth

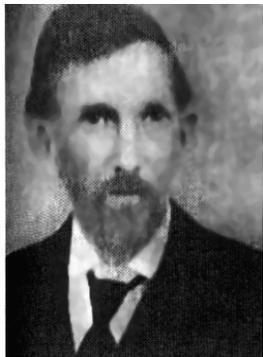
Columbus, Mississippi. The war must have interfered with this one and a similar meeting was held at Berea in 1868. Details of these meetings were published in the *Gospel Advocate*. Questions regarding the scripturalness of these meetings was evidently raised and they ceased after 1870. The battle over the establishment of the American Christian Missionary Society had begun and it must have become apparent to the participants that they were doing the same thing on a much smaller scale. (*I strongly suspect that Tolbert Fanning, who was a bitter foe of the Society, and J.M.*

Pickens, also a foe, reminded them of this on some of their tours through the region..lew) Never the less, it points up the importance of the Berea church in the Northern section of Alabama as well as the Northeastern region of Mississippi and the strong influence it wielded.

Matt Hackworth, son of the lamented Nichodemus Hackworth of Lawrence and Morgan Counties preached for the Berea church often in the 1850's. Matt had two sisters that were members at Berea, Mary Ann Hackworth McCaleb, wife of John McCaleb and Sallie Ann Hackworth Morris, wife of Philemon Morris. Both these families were leading families at Berea for many years.

Jim Wade, son-in-law of Andrew McCaleb, preached for the church for a number of years. He was one of the most respected and beloved preachers. Chester Estes would recall preaching in a meeting at Berea in the mid 1920's. with "Old Brother Wade" in attendance and sitting in a chair on the old bridge that crosses over New River witnessing the baptisms.

In 1874, J. M. Pickens preached in gospel meetings at Buttahatchee and at Berea. In reporting the meetings, he said: "*Berea is an old church, planted many years ago,*



and chiefly by the labors of John Taylor, John McCaleb, Jeremiah Randolph and others. The congregation now numbers about one hundred and fifty members. . . . We made many pleasant acquaintances. Among others, that of John McCaleb, a veteran and a pioneer in Alabama, whom we met here for the first time. Old Bro. Taylor was with us in both

of the meetings and gave much valuable assistance." (*Southern Christian Weekly*, Aug. 20, 1874.)

James S. Wood filled the pulpit from the 1880's until 1900. He was raised at Berea, being the stepson of Joseph Pinkney Whitehead and a son in law of William Pickens Anthony. Virgil Randolph would preach for the church often, although he lived a few miles south in New River and would later preach regularly for the New River church after its establishment. In later years, Houston Haney preached regularly as did Wiley Hollingsworth and Wesley Thompson. Gus and Cary Nichols and their several brothers grew up in the community. Both men would hold meetings for the church in later years.

The Berea church attracted some of the leading preachers in the brotherhood. A list of preachers who preached for this church over the years, reads like a "who's who" of the Restoration Movement. These names include the following: Elisha, Lorenzo D. and Jeremiah Randolph, Tolbert Fanning, Justus M. Barnes, John McCaleb, John Taylor, J.M. Pickens, F.B Srygley, Jimmy Wood, Jim Wade, Jesse Turner Wood, Gus A. Dunn,

Virgil Randolph, Green Haley, James B. Nelson, Flavil Hall, Hal P. McDonald, E C. Fuqua, A.D. Dias, Chester Estes, Gus Nichols and the Blacks, V.P. and Willet. There were many others, of course.

The success of the Gospel meetings of that day are short of amazing. Some of the records of these meetings are available today and we quote some as follows:
Sept.1867–Jeremiah Randolph 7 day meeting– 36 baptisms
Oct. 1896 Jimmy Wood & Jim Wade 27 baptisms
Oct. 1914 -- James B. Nelson 7 day meeting 13 baptisms
Oct. 1920 – Chester Estes 7 day meeting 11 baptisms 9 restored
Oct. 1926 – Hal P. McDonald 5 day meeting 9 baptisms
August 1934 – W.A. Black 7 day meeting 16 baptisms
July 1942 W.A. Black 7 day meeting 21 baptisms
July 1947 Gus Nichols 7 day meeting 21 baptisms

The success of these meetings is a testament not only of the quality of the Berea membership but also to the quality of the preaching. Many of the twenty five or so congregations in Marion and Fayette Counties owe their beginnings to members from Berea who moved into the various communities and began churches or contributed to the local cause by their membership and work in the cause.



Berea Buiding – 2005

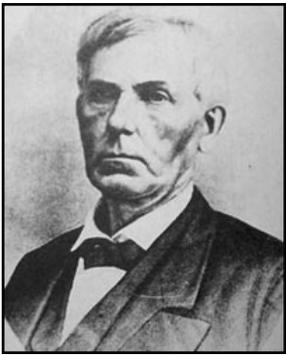
A few miles North of Berea in a quiet cemetery between Brilliant and Guin, Alabama lies the earthly remains of Robert and Jennie McCaleb Logan. Without Robert's desire to know the truth, Berea may never have been born. A few yards from the present building, on a hilltop overlooking the Sipsey River, lies Hugh White and Elizabeth Holbrook McCaleb keeping watch on their beloved Berea. A couple of miles south, in the cemetery at Hubbertville, Andrew and Leah McCaleb await the Saviours call. Southeast two or three miles in the beautiful cemetery at New River, Jeremiah and Virgil Randolph and their devoted wives rest. All knowing that they gave their full measure for the Lord's cause in Fayette County. We can say to these gallant soldiers of the cross as the Navy bellman's call after 175 years..."175 bells and all is well."

LONG LEGS AND SHORT BREECHES

Earl Kimbrough

Tolbert Fanning is generally regarded as the greatest single personal influence on the restoration of primitive Christianity in the South before the Civil War. His influence continued well beyond his lifetime through David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, and others who were his students. Some of these imbibed a double measure of Fanning's spirit. This can be seen in the pages of the Gospel Advocate until the death of F. B. Srygley, the last of that paper's "old guard," who died in 1940. In fact, Fanning's influence is apparent even today in many churches of Christ, not only in the South, but throughout the nation, and among many Christians who know little or nothing about the man. Lipscomb, who greatly admired Fanning, said as a preacher he was characterized by "Websterian clearness and force of statement, and majestic mien, and forceful manner." (*David Lipscomb, Life and Sermons of Jesse L. Sewell, 118.*)

But it was as a gangling teenage farm boy in homespun clothes that Fanning made his first attempts to preach the gospel. This was at Old Republican near Florence, Alabama, in the late 1820s. Fanning had grown to young manhood in that community. Alabama was a new state and its lands had not long been opened for permanent settlement. It was at Old Republican that Fanning heard the ancient gospel preached by



Tolbert Fanning

James E. Matthews and Ephraim A. Smith. But it was Benjamin Franklin Hall who first preached baptism for the remission of sins in that region. Hall was an itinerant dentist who traveled about practicing his profession and preaching the gospel wherever he could find an audience. He preached at Old Republican in the fall of 1827 the same year he first learned the purpose of baptism from reading Alexander Campbell's debate with W. L. MacCalla. At the close of a sermon in which he preached on baptism, Hall invited any among his hearers who so desired to come for baptism. Fanning went forward and confessed his faith in Christ. He was baptized the following day by Matthews.

Soon after his conversion, Fanning became obsessed with a burning desire to preach and began a diligent study of the Scriptures to prepare himself to that end. But his first efforts were discouraging. On one occasion, an elderly sister in the Lord, with a well-meaning heart, "but with a candid and blunt tongue," advised the boy against making a preacher. After hearing his sermon, she said:

"Brother Fanning, you can never preach, and will always run your legs too far through your breeches. Do go

home and go to plowing." Rees Jones, "one of the first and most faithful and self-denying pioneers in the restoration of the Bible as the will of God," took the young man aside and told him: "I do not think you will ever make a preacher. It might be well for you to go at something else." (*James E. Scobey, Franklin College and Its Influence, 11,12.*)

Fanning no doubt grieved over the unfavorable reaction to his first attempts to preach, but he remained unmoved in his resolve, and kept working at it. Lipscomb, in reviewing the evangelist's life, wrote of Fanning that: "He not only grew from the ungainly youth into the model of a man with giant powers and majestic mien, but those who advised him he could never preach lived to hear him hold an audience spellbound from three to five hours, with not an ornamental word or an oratorical gesture." His victory over the disheartening admonitions he received at the beginning of what would be his life's most important work, came about because he trusted in a higher counsel, the same one that motivated the apostle who said, "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." (Phil! 4:13.)

So, dear Christian reader, be careful how you assess the potential of a young man who wants more than anything else to tell the story of Jesus and his love. And be careful what you say in commenting on his elementary efforts. Not many start out with the success of Alexander Campbell. Most have to struggle to get their ministerial footing.

What possible bearing do the length of one's legs and the brevity of his breeches have to do with the making of a preacher? Perhaps the elderly sister's words to young Fanning tell more about her than him. One thing is sure, blunt tongues and judgmental evaluation of preachers, all too often one against another, is still very much in evidence among those who profess to be New Testament Christians. It might do well to remember that, whether young or old, "to his own Master he stands or falls."

Jonah and The Whale

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though they were a very large mammal their throat was very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. The teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was impossible. The little girl said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah." The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you ask him."

“OTHER THINGS”

Chester Estes

While living at Corinth, we were visiting back at Winfield during a meeting being conducted by E.R. Harper. Brother J.O. Jones was the ‘local preacher’ there. As was the custom in that town, they had a Saturday morning meeting to accommodate the people in the rural surroundings. It was their custom to come into town and attend the Saturday church services. The building had an elevated floor to the rear. Chairs were placed along the aisles.

One drinking brother had been on a “spree” for about a week. He walked into the rear of the building, stumbled against one of the chairs and the chairs fell like dominoes from the rear to the front. Brother Harper was on an elevated stage, and thinking the man was a farmer who had come into the building to hear him preach, said, “

that’s OK, come on in.” The brother walked (wobbled) straight down the aisle and gave Harper his hand. Harper told him to sit down on the front seat and he continued speaking. When the invitation song began, this brother got up and gave Harper his hand again. Harper motioned to Jones to go over and speak to him. After Jones had spoken to him, he stated before the audience that brother _____



E. R. Harper

had come to confess his errors and wanted the brethren to pray for him; that he had come forward to be restored. Brother Jones said that brother _____ had been drinking and doing “some other things.” At this point, brother _____ looked up at brother Jones and said “ brother Jones I told you that I had not been doing *other things.*”

The audience was dismissed and everyone left the brother except brother Harper and I. We put him in a car and took him to his home which was about six miles from Winfield.....*Faith That Overcomes*

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NO THREE MONTHS’ NOTICE

Earl Kimbrough

After churches of Christ commonly began using full time, or located, preachers in the 1920s and 1930s, some preachers stayed ten or more years in one place before moving on to other fields, as I. B. Bradley did at Russellville from 1895 to 1905. John T. Lewis preached for the Ensley church in Birmingham for some forty years. Some had even longer records with a single congregation. But more commonly in the twentieth century, three or four years was customary before a preacher’s “relocating.” However, one of the shortest residencies on record was likely that of Joe S. Hyde at Phil Campbell, Alabama, in 1952.

Hyde moved to that community in Franklin County the first of January. On February 23, he wrote a report of his work, saying: “I have been here seven weeks. Twelve have been baptized and four restored. The attendance has steadily increased. The church has built a baptistery and progress is being made. However, I suppose I am too little for the place, as the elders, who are all good men, think they need a bigger preacher and a better man than I, one who can preach against worldliness and not stir up any opposition. I am immediately leaving the work in the interest of peace and harmony. Any church needing my services may write me at Jasper, Ala., General Delivery.” (*Gospel Advocate*, Mar. 20, 1952.)

We read these lines with mixed emotions. Churches, even with good men as elders, very often mistreat preachers. On the other hand, some preachers behave abusively in the pulpit. Not knowing the full story beyond what the preacher reports, we could not justly judge either church or preacher. Hyde was obviously disappointed by his abrupt dismissal, especially in view of the church’s progress. His saying the elders wanted “a bigger preacher” and a “better man” was no doubt sincerely felt by him due to his hurt, and it may have been true, although the elders would probably have used more delicate words.

Regardless of the cause, there was a problem of some sort, and, as is often the case, “the preacher is expendable.” But in spite of his grief, he had a good spirit. He revealed pain but no bitterness toward the elders’ action, he left immediately in the interest of peace and harmony, and he planned to keep on preaching. In this, he is an example to some “bigger” and “better” preachers who, under similar situations, have stayed on and split the church, or at least vented their spleen on the men who discharged them.

If Brother Hyde had a “three months’ agreement” with the church, or some such, between the time of his resignation and departure, he did not use it, but left at once when it was determined that his services were not longer appreciated by the elders.

THE CHURCH IN LAUDERDALE COUNTY 1822-1860

C. Wayne Kilpatrick

In the years that followed the close of the War of 1812, an influx of thousands of settlers came into the northern part of Alabama from Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. With each new settler came his own peculiar religious views, resulting in the founding of churches in order to propagate their views. Along with these settlers from the older states came the views of Barton Stone, James O'Kelly, and a few years later, Alexander Campbell. Just as with other religious groups, the followers of Stone, O'Kelly, and Campbell founded congregations of believers, who were dedicated to spreading the message of the Restoration Movement. Many of these congregations would prosper for a few years and then gradually disappear. Some, however, would weather the storms of time and exist down to the present.

In northwest Alabama, three such congregations have managed to endure; all having begun previous to the Civil War. Several other congregations in this area were not durable. Many of them have faded into obscurity. This portion of Alabama under consideration consists of Lauderdale, Colbert, and Franklin counties, lying at the extreme west end of the Tennessee River Valley in Alabama; Lauderdale lying north of the Tennessee, Colbert lying to the south, and Franklin lying immediately to the south of Colbert. Their histories, both political and religious, have tied them together in times past. Much has been written about the political history of this area, but very little has been written about the religious history. Hardly anything has been written concerning the Restoration Movement in northwest Alabama. F.D. Srygley's biography of T.B. Larimore, Larimore and His Boys, sheds some light upon the history of this area and George and Mildred Watson's History of the Christian Churches in the Alabama Area gives some insight into this part of the state. Several histories of local congregations have appeared, but many times these works are weighted down by local traditions, rather than historical facts. Due to the lack of knowledge on the part of the average church member concerning the Restoration Movement, the purpose of this study is to give a historical account of the movement in this area. Our method shall be to discover who founded these works and what causes them to grow or die, whichever the case may be.

Since every historical work must have a beginning and an end, we have set the date of our study to begin with 1816, the year John Chisholm's family near Cypress Creek, and to end with 1861, the year the Gospel Advocate ceased being published, due to the Civil War. This time span covers nearly forty years of history in Alabama restoration history. It should be remembered,

however, that this is in no way a complete history, because there are examples of churches, such as Liberty, which appeared in The Christian Register of 1848 as being located in Lauderdale County, Alabama, having eighty-five members, and possessing their own house of worship, then disappearing from all written records. Such incidents render it impossible to compile a complete history. History, however, does not dwell upon that which has been lost, but rather that which can be found.

This historical study shall be based upon only that which can be found. In order to prepare such historical undertaking, many sources were consulted. Local newspapers of the period under discussion, local courthouse records, journals of historical societies, unpublished histories and biographical sketches have been a valuable source of material. Several books written by our brethren on subjects not directly related to the Alabama area, yet touching upon it, and literature by other religious groups have proven helpful. Some historical collections of the brotherhood have rendered valuable aids in this investigation, but the chief source of material has been found in brotherhood journals beginning with Campbell's first issue of The Christian Baptist in 1823, through most major journals until the year 1861. Where occasion has demanded and opportunity has afforded, different portions of northwest Alabama have been visited and much valuable information has been gained by private conversation. Such were the sources from whence this history is derived. It is hoped that this uncovering of information will give a better understanding of the Churches of Christ in northwest Alabama.

LAUDERDALE COUNTY 1816-1861

The history of the Stone movement began in Lauderdale County, Alabama, almost parallel with the history of the state. Alabama had scarcely gained statehood (1819) before the influence of Stone and O'Kelly was felt. These brave pioneers came into a wide and fertile valley created by the mighty Tennessee River as it made a large bend across northern Alabama. This was the beautiful Tennessee Valley. They followed the river from Huntsville westward to the foot of the Shoals near where the Natchez Trace crossed the river. Here lay the newly formed town of Florence, Alabama. Florence, being located at the foot of the Shoals and at the head of the navigable waters of the Tennessee, was destined to be a trade center for northwest Alabama.

John Chisholm and his family moved to this area, near Cypress Creek in 1816. The exact month is unknown. It was, however, early in that year. At the same time

Marshall D'Spain and his family moved to the Waterloo area. The Chisholms and D'Spains had moved to Lauderdale County, Alabama seeking fertile new land. Chisholm and D'Spain were sons-in-law to Benjamin Lynn who had established the Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Lynn died in 1814 and never got to move to Lauderdale County with the rest of the family. Lynn had baptized several near Huntsville, thus the Church was of fair size when these families moved westward. The entire congregation made this move. Some of the families moved near Florence and some to Waterloo. Two congregations of the Lord's Church were established immediately, in this northwest Alabama County. The Cypress Creek congregation would prove to be the permanent work.



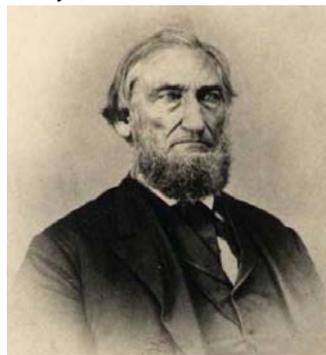
Ephraim D. Moore

It was to this booming area that Ephraim D. Moore, the first "Stonian" preacher, came in late 1823. Moore was born in North Carolina in 1782. Later he moved to Tennessee where he became a Christian. He served under Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans as a mess cook. In 1823 he came to Alabama. B.F. Hall wrote: *He either taught school or labored on his farm for a number of years, during the week, and preached on Lord's days.* Moore had settled in a small village on Cypress Creek about seven miles north of Florence known as Brandon Mills. It was here in the small Cypress Creek community that Moore met young Tolbert Fanning for the first time. Several years later, upon Moore's death, Fanning wrote: *We are more indebted to our deceased Brother, E.D. Moore, for our early religious instructions and impressions than to any other man, dead or alive. Our candid judgment is, that we never saw anyone so careful to teach, particularly young persons in the Christian religion. . . As a teacher of dignity, and elevation of style, we are not sure we ever saw superior. In affections and tenderness of heart, he more favorably impressed us than any man we ever saw; and as a lover of the truth, he had no superior.* Moore's love of the truth manifested itself in many works; one of them beginning here on Cypress Creek. It was about the time that Moore began preaching in this little North Alabama village that the Republican congregation began to move forward. In 1831 James E. Matthews, who came to Republican in 1826, wrote Simon Clough, editor of *The Gospel Luminary*, saying: *When I came to this county, something over five years ago, there was one small church of about 10 members . . .* thus, indicating that the work at

Republican was still alive in 1826, yet had not been in existence long enough to have grown to a large membership. The work at Republican progressed rather slowly during 1825, possibly due to Moore's having to teach and farm during the week and only allowing himself time to preach on Lord's Day. Moore, however, did not let his work keep him from teaching the young people or performing an occasional wedding in the community. Help arrived in 1826 with the coming of James E. Matthews.

Exactly what time in 1826 Matthews came to the Florence area is unknown, but in November he was listed as an agent for *The Christian Messenger* in the Florence area. Matthews was born in Kentucky in 1799. Early in life he became acquainted with the views of Barton Stone and was obedient to the gospel. In 1826 he began preaching and soon came to North Alabama to work. He labored in Lauderdale County over ten years before leaving for Mississippi. Brother Matthews was a vivacious young man when he arrived on Cypress Creek. This vitality, which he possessed, soon began to pay. In 1826 a burst of excitement came with the arrival of B.F. Hall, Matthew's friend, at Republican. It was during this meeting that Tolbert Fanning was baptized "for the remission of sins." By the end of March 1827, Matthews reported: *We have lately had a very reviving season. Last Saturday and Lord's day, eight persons were added to the church, and in a few months past, sixteen have professed faith in Christ. By the middle of October that same year, Moore reports: We have just closed our camp meeting. . . Many were there on Thursday, and continued until Tuesday 12 o'clock, and with reluctance, left the encampment. . . the glorious consequence was, that forty professed faith in Christ, and 26 were baptized strait way - 15 or 20 more have expressed their determination to obey the Lord in his ordinance, at our next monthly meeting. . .*

The good work is moving on in almost every direction. We anticipate happy seasons. One can almost feel the enthusiasm that Moore felt when reporting this work. Because of Moore's renewed enthusiasm and Matthew's already existing enthusiasm, Republican could only grow. Republican was now a pulsating force in the Restoration Movement.



B.F. Hall

It would have been about this time when B.F. Hall came back in this area preaching "baptism for the remission of sins." Hall had already been in North Alabama from the spring of 1824 until the spring of 1826. He came back in the fall of 1826 and stayed until spring, 1827. One must keep in mind, however, that Hall was

not preaching “*baptism for the remission of sins*” during his first work in north Alabama, which was from spring 1824 until spring 1826. It was in the spring of 1826, while on his way back to Kentucky, that Hall stopped at a Brother Guess’ cabin on Line Creek, which ran between Tennessee and Kentucky. It was here that Hall read Alexander Campbell’s debate with W.L. McCalla and for the first time in his life he understood that baptism was for the remission of sins. Hall explained: *I found the keystone of the arch. It has been lost a long time. I had never seen it before – strange that I had not. But I had seen the vacant space in the arch a hundred times, and had some idea of the size and shape of it; and when I saw baptism as Mr. Campbell had presented it, I knew it would fit and fill the vacant space.* Hall began preaching this idea on baptism to everyone who would listen. Hall found eager listeners when he came to Republican.

Hall was set on preaching this New Testament doctrine when he came to Cypress Creek and he did. For the first time the congregation at Republican felt the influence of Alexander Campbell’s teaching on the New Testament doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins. Hall delivered it in a plain and simple manner, yet, so effective. When he extended the invitation, he asked the congregation to sing an “invitation” hymn which was sung for the first time among these people. Fanning came forward and made the good confession. B.F. Hall says Fanning was baptized the next morning by James E. Matthews for the remission of sins. The preaching of Hall had been so convincing that he persuaded Matthews to embrace this doctrine. Upon Hall’s insistence, Matthews wrote three articles on the subject, which were printed in *The Christian Messenger* of 1829. These articles seem to be the first full length articles ever written on the subject of baptism for the remission of sins by any of our brethren, Campbell included. Matthews, like Hall, was now convinced that the doctrine was correct and devoted the remainder of his life to spreading it. In 1831 he wrote Simon Clough concerning this doctrine: *The doctrine of baptism ‘for remission of sins,’ generally prevails, but in a More qualified sense than it is held by Alexander Campbell, Editor of the Millennial Haringer.* Matthews had been exposed to the writings of the *Millennial Harbinger* as early as 1830. Several of his friends were listed in Campbell’s “Ledger,” as having subscribed to the *Harbinger* in 1830, and Matthews, himself, was listed by 1831. His reading of the *Harbinger* placed him in a position to say whether his views or Campbell’s were “the more qualified.” Just to what extent the views of Campbell had been spread throughout northwest Alabama is reflected in a resolution adopted by the Muscle Shoals Association in 1830. The resolution read as follows: *Through Campbellism we see the divine operation of the Holy Spirit either disavowed or so obscurely avowed, as to amount to disavowal. We see*

experimental religion ridiculed and reprobated. We see the apostolic mode of ordaining ministers, by the laying of hands of the presbytery, ridiculed and condemned. We therein see baptism presented as producing a change of heart and pardon of sins, when the Holy Spirit can alone produce a change, while baptism shows our faith, satisfies our conscience, adopts us into His church and makes us one with Him,



Tolbert Fanning

by thus fulfilling all righteousness, a change of hearts being previously affected by the Holy Spirit. We therein see, as we awfully fear, an effort by man to pull down the old order of faith and practice taught by our Lord and His apostles, and establish on their ruins a new order and a new name styled Campbellism. From this time forward the Muscle Shoals area, especially Republican, faced stiff opposition from the Baptists. In spite of this opposition, Matthews and Moore made increasing gains, not only at Republican, but throughout all of Lauderdale County. Matthews, having moved westward from Cypress Creek into the community of Bartons, wrote that there were upwards of 200 at Republican and that he had planted a church of about 60 members in his own immediate vicinity. The strength and influence of Republican caused it to be the site of a Christian Conference in 1830. A detailed description is given by Matthews: *At Republican, Lauderdale co. (sic) Ala. (sic) The Brethren assembled in conference. Several subjects of interest were considered, among which was the ordination of Elders in every church. It appeared to be almost unanimous opinion of the brethren, that if our churches were on apostolic ground they would have Elders, or men of age experience. . .set apart in every church as Bishops, or overseers, whose duty it should be to exercise discipline, administer the ordinances, and assemble the churches frequently, so that in the absence of the preacher or evangelist, the churches might be kept organized.*

With this decision, not only Republican, but all of the churches across north Alabama were taking a giant step toward the restoration of New Testament Christianity. The steps were slow, but each step was deliberate and was placed upon solid ground – the Word of God. Another step was taken in the next conference which began the last day of September in 1831 at Republican. This time the brethren decided to dismiss all of the usual formalities and call no one to the chair, nor choose a President for the meeting. Matthews says: *We entered no resolves upon our minute book, nor did we take the name of an “Advisory Council.” But “with one*

accord, in one place” we mutually engaged in arranging the appointments for our next annual meetings, so as to best promote the cause of the Redeemer. . . With the proceedings in this conference the brethren in North Alabama had taken a monumental step toward completely abandoning any human organizations. No doubt this very act in 1831 helped shape the thinking of the brethren in this area concerning societies.

The next conference, which was held at Republican in October of 1832, reflected the changing attitudes of the brotherhood toward conferences. Only ten persons were baptized, and Matthews stated: “. . . *prospects were not so flattering as formerly.*” It seems, also, that a question had arisen over baptism being made a test of communion. Up until this time, the practice at Republican had been to let all denominations partake of the communion. Men such as Moore and Matthews were of the opinion that such act was scriptural. They felt that by allowing the denomination to commune with the Christians, they could win them to the truth by “*speaking the truth in love.*”

Things seem to have improved somewhat during 1833. Matthews reports in a letter to the Messenger dated August 8, 1833, that eight persons had been added and again on September 3, 1833, he reported 30 had been added. He states: “. . . *the churches in Alabama are gradually increasing, and the prospects brightening. The preaching brethren are becoming alive to the work.*”

The next Christian Conference was to be held in Lauderdale County beginning on the second Lord’s day in August of 1834, the last four having been there, also. The mainstream of the restoration in north Alabama had, by this time, focused on Lauderdale County, and Republican in particular. But all of this was soon to change. E.D. Moore had already moved to Texas sometime during 1832, and James Matthews was having to attend all the churches in Lauderdale and Limestone counties. Matthews had already complained of having “a broken constitution” and “fasting declining health.” He had also, by now, begun to center his Lauderdale County work around the western end of the county toward Waterloo. This is evidenced by the fact that Barton Stone had sent several songbooks to Matthews through the Waterloo Post Office in January of 1833. The facts are not exactly clear concerning the work at Waterloo, but it seems as though a work had been established there at this time.

Even though by now Matthews had centered his work around Barton’s and Waterloo, the Republican work continued to thrive. James Young was emerging as a prominent figure at the Cypress Creek work. He had been ordained as an evangelist sometime after the 1830 Christian Conference in which it was decided to ordain elders and evangelists in every congregation. By August of 1834, Young was the agent for the Messenger in the Florence area. Several members were now taking the Christian Messenger in this area at this time. Several

members, including Young, were subscribing to the Harbinger, also. Subscriptions to the brotherhood journals indicate an interest in one’s spiritual condition, as well as an interest in what was going on in the brotherhood. Such was the attitude of the membership at Republican during the mid 1830’s.

In March of 1836 James Matthews describes the condition of the church throughout north Alabama as “being rotten to the core” and being in need of “radical reform.” He writes: I cannot but believe that impending vengeance is hanging over our guilty land. The retributive justice of the Almighty will not sleep, nor be withheld forever. Perhaps Matthews’ constitution having been broken and his ill health helped shape this dismal picture of the Alabama work. Brother James Young gives another picture entirely in his letter of October 23, 1836. He states that the church at Florence (Cypress Creek) had five additions and that the prospects for the Florence work was “good.” He goes on to report nine baptisms elsewhere. According to Young, the church was still growing at Republican. One thing that did help retard the growth at Republican, as well as elsewhere in north Alabama, was the fact that Christian Conferences were no longer held, or if so, no mention of them can be found after 1834. Camp meetings were still held, but they did not draw the crowds in the capacity that the conferences had drawn them. This was a visible sign that the work was slowing down. Another thing that probably hurt the work in this area was that by 1835, Stone had moved his *Messenger* to Jacksonville, Illinois, and was giving more attention to the work in Missouri and Illinois. Alabama no longer had a prominent place in the Messenger. Stone’s publication seemed to have been the “chord” that bound the north Alabama brethren together. Once the Messenger was removed, the work in north Alabama seemed to be retarded, especially in Lauderdale County. The brethren needed a new motivating force in the form of a journal. The Harbinger was being read by many Lauderdale Countians, but was looked upon by many as being too harsh toward the denominations. Matthews expressed the sentiment of most north Alabama brethren when he compared The Christian Messenger to the works of Alexander Campbell. He wrote: “*I think the latter have too much severity attached to them.*” The brethren believed the truth was to be spoken “in love.” Apparently, they felt Campbell did not always speak in this manner. The search for something to replace the *Messenger* and its influence is evidenced by the names of many north Alabama brethren which appeared in other brotherhood journals, such as Walter Scott’s *Evangelist* and D.S. Burnet’s *Christian Preacher*. It was not until Tolbert Fanning’s *Christian Review* appeared in January of 1844 that the problem was solved. By Fanning having come from this area, it was felt that once more the work in north Alabama would receive the proper attention. It now had

been over nine years since the Messenger had dominated this area. Many changes had taken place in Lauderdale County during these nine years.

By 1844 Matthews had moved to Mississippi and had become involved in politics. The works at Bartons and Waterloo were on decline and were doomed to eventually disappear completely. Dr. W.H. Wharton, from Tusculum, made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a work in the Middle Cypress community (Bethel Berry) in 1838. During this meeting, five persons were baptized, one being John Ijams, the grandfather of our beloved E.H. Ijams. Several years later, a young gospel preacher fresh out of Franklin College, by the name of T.B. Larimore helped organize a permanent work in this same community. Republican was slowly undergoing a name change during the late 1830's. The name was being called Old Cypress. This name remained until the middle 1850's when it began to be called Stoney Point. The Cypress Creek brethren were still meeting in a campground, a huge clearing with a brush arbor. The absence of a building for the brethren is evidently shown by the fact that when Tolbert Fanning visited his old friends in this area in 1842, his preaching had to be conducted in a Methodist meeting-house. Fanning again had to secure the use of the Methodist building on November 2, 1844.

Here, after greeting some of the preachers of the north Alabama area and many old friends, he preached for three days of "the first principles of Christianity." James Hackworth and James Young were two of the Lauderdale County preachers who attended this meeting. For some time the burden of spreading the message of the Gospel in this country had been solely upon Young and Hackworth. Hackworth admired Fanning greatly but would not hesitate to disagree with Fanning when the occasion arose. One such instance is illustrated by Hackworth after Fanning had alluded to the establishment of the church in Russellville, Alabama, as being providential. Hackworth wrote: *I am of the opinion that your pen rather slipped when you said the gathering of the church at Russellville was a providential thing.* It seems that he never agreed with Fanning upon this point, but it never ended their friendship. Later, Hackworth developed some rather strange views concerning the Holy Spirit and again he and Fanning disagreed. During the time Hackworth was at the church on Cypress Creek, he wrote concerning the state of the congregation there:

We are in a tolerable state of spiritual health. We meet weakly (sic) and break the loaf, sing praises, teach and exhort poor sinners to obey our blessed Lord and we are often much refreshed. In spite of the continuance of weekly meetings to "break the loaf," "sing," and "teach," and "exhort," the past glory of the Cypress Creek work was fading. In 1848 its membership was only 67; however, they had by now secured a meetinghouse near

Cypress Creek that faced the south, standing in front of a post oak tree, and was entered from the south end. There was only one other meeting-house in the county owned by our brethren at that time. The congregation at Liberty boasted of having their own meetinghouse and a membership of 85 souls. James Young was minister to the Liberty and Blue Water churches; Blue Water having only 13 members. Both congregations have long since passed from the pages of recorded history.

J.M. Hackworth was now gone from Old Cypress leaving it without a regular minister. James Young was still living in the community, but he was preaching for several congregations, both in Lauderdale and surrounding counties. With the coming of the decade of the 1850's, the work here was on fairly good footing. The burden of keeping the flock together fell on the eldership, which was composed of P. Gresham, C.W. Wesson and Andrew J. Grisham (probably Gresham) and probably others. An occasional visit from Brother J.H. Dunn of Limestone County helped to keep the congregation revived.



J.M. "Matt Hackworth

In the summer of 1851, one such period of revival came. J.H. Dunn and J.J. Trott came to Old Cypress in early July and worked with the brethren for seven days. This resulted in seventeen confessions and one restoration. The brethren had "*all things in common,*" sharing both their joy and their food. Trott referred to their eating together as a "*basket meeting.*" He describes the feeling during this time by writing:

They manifested zeal and Christian hospitality of the primitive disciples in 'having all things in common' and being of 'one heart and soul.' The feelings experienced during this meeting, no doubt, reminded the older brethren of days gone by when "Old Republican" was the pride of the north Alabama brotherhood.

By this time, brethren in the Tennessee Valley were relaxing their feelings somewhat towards some sort of cooperation among the churches, especially in evangelization, but not without some opposition. By 1850 they were planning on having a cooperation meeting at Green Hill in Limestone County. Tolbert Fanning was to attend. Either the meeting never materialized or it was a complete failure, because Fanning never printed anymore in his *Christian Magazine* concerning the meeting. Some of the churches joined in with the Tennessee Evangelizing Association the next year. J.H. Dunn was the "State Evangelist of North Alabama" in 1851, and only received \$208. for that year's labors. The blame for such a small

amount of pay was: The committee upon Evangelizing never received any funds for Alabama, and at our late state meeting there was no representation for that state. Their connection with us seemed more formal than real.

By June of 1852, James Young of Florence and David G. Ligon of Moulton were placed on the Board of Directors for the Tennessee Evangelizing Committee. This shows that some of the brethren, at least, were now interested in seeing the preaching conditions in their area remedied. By September, the north Alabama area had in mind to try another cooperation meeting at Green Hill in Limestone County. Again, nothing much was ever reported on the outcome of this organized effort. It seems that many brethren were still skeptical of this type of cooperation. James Young's involvement in the Tennessee Evangelizing Committee may indicate, however, that the Cypress Creek brethren were in favor of some sort of cooperation, because by October 27, 1860, the Stoney Point, Old Cypress congregation, had sent two of its elders to the cooperation meeting in LaFayette County, Alabama.

During the organization attempts of the 1850's, several preachers visited Lauderdale County; some to preach and some for other reasons. In April of 1852, J.B. Ferguson came to the resort community of Bailey Springs, about eight miles east of Florence, apparently to recuperate from some illness. He wrote concerning himself: "*We have been communing with the deep spirit of affliction. . .*" J.H. Dunn and John Taylor visited the county many times during this period and helped keep the churches alive. Brother Dunn wrote concerning one such visit in 1856: I visited Old Cypress - now called Stoney Point - Lauderdale County, Alabama, and held a meeting of three days continuance, including the Lord's day in last month (November), at which time we had three additions by confession and baptism. The dropping spirits of the brethren and sisters were much revived during the very pleasant interview. By 1858, Dunn was writing:

The cause of primitive Christianity progresses slowly in North Alabama, owing the scarcity of proclaimers of the 'pure testimony of God.' In the same letter he reported only one addition at Stoney Point during that preaching engagement. The next month he reported three more additions. John Taylor's work was about the same as J.H. Dunn's work. Taylor writes: I attend the congregation at Stoney Point, in Lauderdale County once a month, and have thus far made fourteen additions. In this letter Brother Taylor gives an insight into the congregation's condition at this time. He states: This congregation now numbers over one hundred, meets every Lord's day, and are in a prosperous condition . . . In this same letter, he says the brethren at Stoney Point were expecting Tolbert Fanning to come and spend a week with them. Fanning was already, at that time, preaching across north Alabama. The same year (1860), Fanning was on his north Alabama visit, the cooperation meeting was held in LaFayette county. George L. Brown was selected to be state evangelist for Lauderdale, Limestone, and Franklin counties, for the year of 1861. At this time, Stoney Point had contributed one hundred dollars

to the evangelizing association and was reported to have a membership of 58. Richard James, in an unpublished thesis, reported 60 members at Florence Stoney Point at this time. John Taylor had earlier reported that the congregation "numbered over one hundred," but this figure, no doubt, reflected the number of young children and non-members in attendance there. It seems that the brethren in Lauderdale County were coming into the Civil War period on relatively weak footing and one would wonder if they would survive the coming crisis. Sadly to say, very little has been said concerning our Lauderdale County brethren during the war.

The Civil War brought to a close a glorious period of the Restoration Movement in Lauderdale County. From its beginning in 1824 down to 1861, the work here had been blessed by many great "workers for the Master." Preachers like E.D. Moore, James E. Matthews, James Hackworth, and James Young, who worked on a permanent basis, and men like B.F. Hall, Tolbert Fanning, J.J. Trott, J.H. Dunn, John Taylor, and other itinerant workers, all made a lasting impression upon this county. They helped mold its basic beliefs, which have been handed down to the present. Preachers are not the only people who make up a work, however. It would only be fair to mention some of the other citizens of the Lord's Kingdom, who helped carry the work in the county. General Leroy P. Walker, a member on Cypress Creek, served as a circuit judge in the early days of Alabama history. Fanning said of General Walker's wife, upon her death: She was brought up in the midst of prosperity and affluence, and she was one of the very few, who regarded the 'reproach of Christ,' of greater value than gorgeousness of earth. Another member was Dr. John H. Hancock, who was described as: . . . a decided character, both as a citizen, and physician. A tall, fine looking man, bold and reckless in the expression of his views, he was an accomplished physician, and had an extensive practice. Another doctor among the saints at Cypress Creek, was Dr. Gabriel Bumpus, who sometimes was called "Gabe." He is listed in Campbell's Ledger in 1844 as a subscriber to *The Millennial Harbinger*. Here his name was entered as "Dr. Edward G. Bumpus." Bumpus is described as follows: Of very large stature, weighing about three hundred pounds, very eccentric in Manners and laconic in expression, an excellent physician and a ruling spirit, he Acquired considerable celebrity. He possessed an endless variety of proverbs and never wasted any breath in giving expression to his thoughts. Bumpus lived to be one hundred years old.

Other members who became prominent in the community were men like Dr. Pugh Houston, described as intelligent and a skillful physician, who was a brother to Governor George Houston, and John Chisholm, Esquire, who probably was a lawyer. There are many members who never gained prominent places in the Lauderdale community, but rather gained prominent places in the Lord's community, which after all, was the purpose of the Restoration Movement in Lauderdale County, Alabama.

In the Next Issue, we will continue this series with Lauderdale County: The Post Civil War year.....

TRIBUTES TO F. B. SRYGLEY

Earl Kimbrough

Alabama has produced some great gospel preachers over the years. Few had greater influence on New Testament Christianity in their generation and since than F. D. and F. B. Srygley. About the first twenty years of their lives were spent at Rock Creek, Alabama, where their characters were molded by their Christian home, the



F. B. Srygley

old Rock Creek church, and the community in and around Rock Creek. Each left Alabama after they begin preaching to make their homes in other states, but Alabama never left them. They always treasured their Rock Creek roots and often referred to the place, times, and people of that region that touched their

lives. Both were greatly influenced by preachers John Taylor, J. M. Pickens, and T. B. Larimore. The brothers held the distinction of being numbered among that galaxy of men who manned the ramparts of the *Gospel Advocate* between the time of David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell and the beginning of World War II. F. D. Srygley died at a young age in 1900, while F. B. Srygley lived until 1940, being the last of “the old guard” on the *Gospel Advocate*.

In 1938, three years before F. B. Srygley’s death at the age of eighty, H. Leo Boles paid genuine and justified tribute to the old warrior in an article, entitled, “An Appreciation of F. B. Srygley” (reproduced herein). The following week, Srygley responded in his space in the *Advocate* to Boles’ accolade, expressing himself in moving tones of mutual affection and heartfelt gratitude. Srygley began: “The last issue of the *Gospel Advocate* seemed to me to be rather burdened with personalities. I have a more prominent place in it than I have had in one issue in all my life.” Although Srygley’s desk was in the same office with John T. Hinds, the editor, Boles article was kept secret from him until it was published. Srygley continued: “I did not know that it had ever entered his mind to write such a thing. The first time I knew anything about was when Brother Hinds came from his desk to mine and said, ‘I have a surprise for you,’ and handed me the paper opened at Brother Boles’ article.”

Srygley’s sincere humility was apparent as he read Boles’ words. “I had some strange thoughts,” he said. “I began to wonder what I had done. I began at once to read it, or to try to read it; but directly my glasses got

blurred, and I had to stop and wipe them. But they soon got in the same condition, and I put the paper in my pocket and went home to read it. While I cannot say that I do not enjoy such praise, I can only wonder what I have done to merit it. I have tried to live a simple life, but I have never been entirely satisfied with it. I would not be human not to appreciate the good things Brother Boles said, but it brings responsibilities upon me to feel that good men are willing to trust me.” He concluded his response to Boles, saying: I thank Brother Boles for these good things which he said about me, and may I never disappoint him.” (*Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 24, 1936.)

When Srygley referred to the December 17 issue of the *Advocate* as being “rather burdened with personalities,” he meant that along Boles’ words of praise for him, there appeared also an unconnected letter by Price Billingsley, which Srygley knew about. However, the article came to him in a strange manner. Srygley said: “There is something about this whole matter that amuses me. Price Billingsley sent his communication to me at night by special delivery, thinking I would not know who was the author of it, as he did not sign it. But when he put it in an envelope, he, without thinking, put it in one of his business envelopes, which had his signature on it.”

Srygley carried the letter to the *Advocate* office the next morning and showed it to W. E. Brightwell who suggested that it be published. Billingsley did not intend the letter for publication, but Srygley persuaded him to allow its publication. Billingsley consented, but made a point of saying: “Do as you please, but understand that I do not ask its publication.” Srygley told Brightwell to make a statement to that effect, but instead, Brightwell ran the statement immediately after Srygley’s response to the letter. Srygley thought this gave the appearance that he had demanded its publication, which seemed to embarrass him, but he added that it was all right “as I was glad to see it in the *Advocate*.” The letter was highly complimentary of Srygley and requested that he “give us a series” of articles on some suggested themes tapping what Billingsley saw as “a new vein of rare material in which the general public will show immense interest?” The letter also gives a distinct insight to conditions among churches of Christ at that time, which is probably the reason Brightwell urged its publication and Srygley agreed to it. (See Billingsley’s article in this issue.)

While there is no doubt that Srygley’s compliance with Billingsley’s request would have greatly increased our knowledge of the history of his times and would have been an encouragement to those who were standing fast for “the old paths” against great odds, he felt that it was “a large order” and that he would have to “have time to even make an effort at it.” There was another reason he could not agree to the request, which might be a good lesson for

historians. He said: "These suggestions are all in the past; and while I am willing to live some in the past, I want to spend most of my efforts on the present. If we live right today, we will be in the best condition to have a good tomorrow; and tomorrow, if we live right, we will have a good yesterday. Living right today prepares for the present, the past, and the future. If we do our duty, God will take care of the consequence."

Nevertheless, Srygley deeply appreciated "the nice things" Billingsley said about him, adding, "I hope I may be able to live in a way as not to disappoint him." (*Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 17, 1936.)*Earl Kimbrough*

An Appreciation of F. B. Srygley **H. Leo Boles**

F. B. Srygley was born at Rock Creek, Colbert County, Ala., September 10, 1859. He was baptized into Christ by J. H. Halbrook, August 26, 1876; hence, he has

been a member of the church of Christ for sixty years. He attended school at Mars Hill College, near Florence, Ala., under the presidency of the lamented T. B. Larimore, and began preaching soon thereafter. In 1882 he devoted all of his time to evangelistic work in Alabama. He has been preaching the gospel for more than fifty years. He has done much evangelistic work in rural districts and small towns throughout the Southern States. No preacher of the gospel living today has done more missionary work than F. B. Srygley. He has established churches in the country and in towns that are now large and influential churches. His labors have always been crowned with success. No one can justly charge that F. B. Srygley is opposed to missionary work. He has always been opposed to human schemes and self-promoted missionary activities for the glory of man and the enrichment of man's purse. But his more than fifty years' services as a preacher of the gospel confirm his belief in carrying out his belief in carrying out the commission of our Lord, who said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation."



H. Leo Boles

The last few years of his life have been given to editorial work on Sunday-school literature and the *Gospel Advocate*. He has a thorough knowledge of the Bible, and an appreciation of divine thought, and a reverence for the truth of God. The writer has been closely associated with him for a number of years, and has had ample opportunities to know him and know his ability, his love

for God, and his loyalty to the church of our Lord. No man "among us" can claim greater loyalty to the church than F. B. Srygley. He has fought more battles for the truth of God, won more victories over error and false teachers, than any man known to the writer. There is a monument on the public square at Knoxville, Tenn., erected to the memory of John Sevier, a pioneer of Tennessee, and on that monument may be read this inscription: "Thirty-Six Battles, Thirty-Six Victories." F. B. Srygley has engaged in more battles for the truth and has won more victories for the truth than did this pioneer in carnal warfare. No one has sacrificed more time from home and family for the cause of Christ than has he. He is still on the "firing line," and is still doing heroic service for the Master. Those who read his editorials can bear testimony that he is like Moses in one respect at least: "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." He is ready now to wage a relentless warfare against every encroachment on the truth of God and against the enemies of the church of our Lord. Brother Srygley's editorials are not only readable, but they ring true to the gospel truth. One may not agree with him in everything that he may write, neither do all agree that he even writes what he does in the best manner; but what he writes is generally, if not always, true to the book of God. He is generally found on the right side of the question. He views all questions in the light of the truth and evaluates all things by the standards of revealed truth. He has a clear insight into all of the intricate problems of the brotherhood.

He can analyze with accuracy the problems that trouble brethren and churches. He can apply scriptural teaching and solve these problems. By nature and training, experience and knowledge he can estimate the value of situations, and his teachings are clear and definite with respect to them. He is a safe and sound teacher of the truth of God. It falls to his lot to deal with problems and situations that have disturbed the peace and harmony of "our brotherhood." He watches with a keen eye every outcropping of error and speculation "among us."

These things are written without his consent, or even his knowledge. They are written to give honor to whom honor is due and to express an appreciation to him before God calls him hence for the very valuable service that he has rendered during the last half century in the service of God. This is only giving the flowers while one is living and not waiting until one has passed to his reward. It is not meant as a mere "compliment" or "eulogy." It is an expression of an appreciation of him and his work. May the Lord bless him and spare him many more years to remain with us. He is the last one remaining of the "old guard." David Lipscomb and E. G. Sewell have gone, T. B. Larimore and J. C. McQuiddy have passed on, E. A. Elam and F. W. Smith are no more; only F. B. Srygley of this noble company remains. Let us honor him for his; work's sake. *Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 17, 1936

A RICH, NEW MINE

Price Billingsley

I mean the publication of F. B. Srygley's reminiscences. Some weeks back he gave the Gospel Advocate readers two or three articles on the records of his family and the church in Coal Hill, Ark., an intensely readable and instructive write-up, which must have pleased his reading public. And now he has other articles of the same character, reporting upon the life and work of a pioneer gospel preacher, a Brother Taylor. Is not this a new vein



Price Billingsley

of rare material in which the general public will show immense interest? Suppose he should give us a series along the line of the following themes: Some outstanding meetings, great debates, character of pioneer preachers, hardships in a new field, how their support was raised, how churches were built and

succored, wiles of false teachers, perils from false brethren, spread of digression, feeding and developing young Christians. Still active in the present generation, Brother Srygley has lived and labored fruitfully in another generation. He has come off more than conqueror from many a field of battling for the Lord and the truth. He is a heroic survivor of another day, yet is keenly alive to present-day problems, and is wise from a rich experience to point to their correct solution. Do we not generally stand in sharp need of the service he might hereby render us? We have come upon soft and perilous times for the church and the truth of our Lord. Many of our leaders are unwilling to attack and expose sin in high places.

Brother Srygley stands almost alone in willingness to take the field to meet and expose popular errors, within the church and out. He has done a lot of this from the compelling sense that it needs so badly to be done, yet so few are doing it. Many brethren incline to the view that fighting is about all he can do or cares for. He needs no defense, of course; for good Christians throughout the land perceive the truth of this matter. But he gives unmistakable evidence of being able to write upon many other issues; and I, for one, should be mightily pleased if he should open his heart and tell us in detail of his life and labors, of a former day. Jehovah himself has adopted this method of teaching—namely, stating the law and following it with records of how men did and did not live within this law. And is not this method the most impressive known for fixing truth in the heart?

F. B. Srygley nears his fourscore years. His physical frame bends under the weight of years, but, so far as we can judge, his mind is as clear as ever it was. His soul mellows and his Christian character assumes its final lofty proportions. Undoubtedly he now has his entire life and labors in clearer perspective than ever before, and the of church of the New Testament with its holy laws, the great principles of the gospel, the character and traits of the true preacher of the word, and the virtues of the Lord's saints. I say it must be that all these things now stand out boldly in his mind's eye. His ripe judgment and varied experiences over a long life filled with faithful labors of the Lord—if he should choose to report upon all these, it could not but be of inestimable worth to us all. It is fit that he should live much in the past; that his mind should dwell upon former labors and upon that great company of faithful men and women he has known in earlier years, the reviewing of which, should he set it on paper, would be profitable to the general public. So I ask: Why not now turn back the pages of his memory and tell us all that is in his heart, and in so doing help us of this hour?

Gospel Advocate, Dec. 17, 1936

VISIT TO A COUNTRY GRAVE YARD

In May of this year, 1979. I stepped over a stone fence into the silent resting place of the dead, Campbell cemetery in Bethany, West Virginia. There was a slight drizzle of rain falling as I stood looking at the names on the grave markers. Some were familiar to me, Alexander Campbell. W. K. Pendleton and others I don't recall.

To me these were great men of the past. Oh, I know they made their mistakes as all men do, but in their life they did many good things. As my thoughts went back to the time these men lived how much simpler life was then, than now! Or was it? It seems that every generation has its problems, and I'm sure they had theirs.

Suddenly the wind rustled the stillness around me and went on its way, and I thought of the influence these men had on countless thousands of men and women in their day and since. Even now their influence is felt by those of us who love and demand Bible for what we say and practice in religion. For it was here in this part of the country that the Restoration movement had its beginning with the Campbells and others.

The Campbell home is a few hundred yards down the hill much as it was when he died; the furniture he used is still in the house, even to the bed in which he slept as he died. Bethany College is down the road. In the little town of Bethany is the old Meeting House where they worshipped and where I suppose Daniel Summer preached his lesson on the "Mite Society" that had started in the Church there.

I really enjoyed my visit. There is much history of the Church.....*Unknown*

GUSTUS ALBERT DUNN, Sr.

Scott Harp

G.A. Dunn was not born in Alabama, but he was a fixture in this state for most of his adult life. He was the first president of Alabama Christian College of Berry in Fayette County. He held meetings in just about every town, village and hamlet for 40 or fifty years. In his later years, he would hold tent meetings in rural areas of the State. The great good he accomplished here will only be known in eternity. Brother Dunn loved Alabamians and it was clear that they loved him. It can almost be said that he was an "Alabama boy," even though he was a native of Tennessee.....Editor.....

Gustus Albert Dunn was born in Readyville, Tennessee, June 2, 1876. His parents were T.F. and Elizabeth Dunn (buried in Murfreesboro, Tennessee). He was part of a family of five brothers, all of whom preached the gospel in the course of their lives. He was married to Mae Mather, and together they had four children. One son, Gus A. Dunn, Jr. also preached the gospel.

Gus was baptized by James A. Harding in March of 1895, at the age of eighteen. The following year he began preaching the gospel of Christ. He was educated at College in Winchester, Tennessee; then at Nashville Bible School and Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee; and then at Clark University where he received the M.A. Degree; later at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas where he received the B.D. Degree.



Gus A. Dunn

While in Tennessee he preached at various locations on a regular basis, preaching in Gospel meetings throughout central Tennessee. When he moved to Texas he preached regularly in Cleburne, Texas from 1904-1905; Houston Heights Church of Christ, Houston, Texas from 1916-1917; Central Church of Christ in Houston, Texas from 1918-19. As an evangelist he held hundreds of Gospel Meetings, averaging about 20 to 25 per year with great success. In 1904 he preached in Cleburne and had 88 to obey the gospel. In 1912 in Hodges, Alabama he had a meeting where 74 were baptized into Christ. In 1920 he held one Gospel Meeting in Sherman, Texas. In it there were 123 responses, of which 95 were baptized. In 1922 another meeting was held in Sherman that saw 70 additions to the kingdom. In 1897 in Oak Ridge, Mississippi he baptized 88 during the course of the meeting, including two Baptist preachers, John W. Thompson and E.S. Martin. Through the years he baptized more than 1,000 former Baptist

church members among the many thousands he baptized.

Dunn had a great interest in writing. He submitted articles to the *Gospel Advocate* and *Firm Foundation* on a regular basis.

At the turn of the 20th century many debates were necessary to clarify the teaching of truth against an array of the false teachings of the day. There was the Dunn-Milborn Debate in 1909. He debated the great Baptist champion, Ben M. Bogard in 1910. There was the Dunn-Sands Debate on Catholicism as well. He did radio work in Paducah, Kentucky; Montgomery, Alabama; Key West, Florida; Dallas, Texas; and Florence, South Carolina.

He served as president of three high schools and two Bible colleges in his lifetime. He was quoted as saying, "I wish I had done more for the Lord and mankind. My work has not been enough nor good enough to satisfy me. May God have mercy on it and me."

Widely known, loved, and respected, G.A. Dunn was a power among sound preachers of the gospel in his generation. Preachers forty years after his death had a Gus Dunn story.

Brother Gus Dunn passed from this life February 28, 1967 and was buried in the Laurel Land Cemetery in Dallas, Texas to await the Lord's call. **Scott Harp..the restorationmovement.com**

Unintentional Baptism

In the early 1950's, Gus A. Dunn was in a Gospel Meeting at Quinn Memorial church of Christ in Franklin County, Alabama. As he moved about the pulpit area making his points, he stepped further back each time. Finally he stepped back, lost his balance and fell head "foremost" into the baptistery. His feet were up in the air and it was obvious that he was in serious trouble. Members of the congregation were no doubt aghast and feared he was drowning as he thrashed about trying to right himself. Finally, several of the men, coming out of the shock of the moment, rushed to his aid and lifted him from his peril. Obviously he was embarrassed, as well as the congregation was embarrassed for him. When it was evident that he was not injured, he proceeded with the sermon. I guess one could say the sermon was thusly "watered down."...LEW

Rock Creek Philosophy

"Most of the troubles in the churches are caused by selfishness." *F.B. Srygley*

“RACCOON” JOHN SMITH: FRONTIERSMAN & PREACHER

Hoyt Houchen

“Raccoon” John Smith was not an Alabamian .He was a Tennessean. He did, however, have strong connections in Alabama. He moved his family to Huntsville, Al. in 1814, while still preaching for the Baptists. He made several trips to Alabama in later years.

Smith became a legendary figure and one of the most beloved of early gospel preachers.....Editor

A more impressionable mark has never been made upon the pages of restoration history than The one left by ‘Raccoon’ John Smith, frontiersman and preacher. Having a Kentucky background on both sides of my family, this unusual character has been a source of peculiar interest to me. The account of his struggle for truth is most thrilling to read. Students of biography and history are not only absorbed by the interest of this exciting character, but the story of his life is an inspiration to any reader who has a priceless regard for truth.

Born on October 15, 1784 in Sullivan County in East



Tennessee, John Smith was the ninth of thirteen children. Like other boys in that period, at an early age he helped his father on the farm and attended school only when he could be spared from work. In those days an education was regarded as a luxury. The country was sparsely settled and, on one occasion, John Smith who was only twelve years of age, was sent by his father 100 miles on horseback

“Raccoon” John Smith to get seed for corn planting. Imagine today, if we can, a lad of such tender years swimming streams, spending nights in log cabins, and confronting the dangers and hazards that such a long journey would require. He was a rugged individualist of the true order.

Breaking ground and clearing trees, the young frontiersman at an early age was introduced to Calvinism with its emphasis upon total depravity, unconditional election and reprobation. Calvinism was the popular theology of his day. And, while the young John Smith toiled through the summer days of heat and the frigid snows of winter farming for a livelihood, the fatigue of his physical body did not begin to compare with the conflict within his mind. In the serenity of the forests, John Smith did take time to think. Enclosed by the towering trees, and alone with his own thoughts, he endeavored to reconcile what he had been taught and the experiences related by others with what the Bible teaches. The Bible was his

earliest reading book, thus having a tremendous influence upon his young restless mind. Although he had been taught the doctrine of hereditary depravity at an early age, Smith was unable to accept the idea that he was too wicked to be saved. Neither was he honestly able to believe that some special working of the Spirit had to be experienced before he could be saved. As he listened intently to the testimonies and experiences of others, John Smith’s honest heart could not believe that he had ever had such an experience. Between a desire to be saved and what he had been told about some kind of direct operation of the Holy Spirit, this uneducated but intelligent and honest man, struggled for many years. He had an open mind with a desire to learn.

In 1803, when John was nineteen, his father died. John then searched for truth even more diligently. The struggle continued. He tried to “get religion” but it resulted in a vain effort. He was later told that he had been converted which made him happy; however, he continued to entertain doubts for he had never had any of the experiences testified by others and which he supposed he should have.

In 1806, at the age of twenty-two, he married Anna Townsend and moved with his bride to 200 acres of land which he had secured. John and Anna worked hard preparing their undaubed cabin of logs, and Smiths task for the winter was to clear land for spring planting. Their union was blessed by the birth of four children.

A sad event took place in the life of John Smith, but the calamity had some influence upon his turn from Calvinism which he was then preaching. On November 2, 1814, he moved his family to an unoccupied cabin near Huntsville, Alabama which he temporarily rented. Smith left his family in the care of God and rode horseback to fill a preaching appointment. At home, his wife had been called to the bedside of a sick neighbor. And, taking a young infant in her arms, she left at twilight on her errand of love. The three older children were left in the care of her brother and a younger sister. About ten o’clock that night screams of anguish were heard and the flames of her burning house were seen. With the infant in arms, she ran to the fire. Only the restraint by a friend withheld the horror stricken mother from leaping with her baby into the fire. But the fire took its toll. Two of the children, Eli and Elvira, who had been tenderly kissed by their loving mother before bedtime, were burned to death. In a short time Smith returned to face the tragedy, bury the charred bones of the children, and share the sorrow with his beloved wife. Soon his good wife, broken hearted with grief, also died. She was buried near the ashes of her children. But *it* was this experience, it is believed, which caused “Raccoon” John Smith to re-evaluate his thinking about the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination.

He pondered about the destiny of his two children who had died. He rebelled at the idea of his innocent little children being damned to hell. Returning to Kentucky, John Smith preached with a sad and perplexed heart. Later Smith was married to Nancy Hurt in a simple wedding on December 25, 1821.

“Raccoon” John Smith’s struggle with Calvinism was soon to end. He had come into contact with Alexander Campbell by reading *The Christian Baptist*, a religious journal published by Campbell. He met Campbell personally and later rode horseback twenty miles to hear him preach. Campbell spoke on the allegory of Hagar and Sarah in Galatians 4. When the assembly was dismissed. Smith remarked to a fellow listener, “Is it not hard, brother Billy, to ride twenty miles, as I have done, just to hear a man preach thirty minutes⁷ You are mistaken, brother John; look at your watch. It has been longer than that.” He look at his watch, and to his surprise, saw that the discourse had been just two hours and a half long. Holding up his watch, he remarked: “I have never been more deceived. Two hours of my life are gone, I know not how, though wide awake, too, all the time’ Did you find out, brother John,” now asked Vaughn, ‘whether he was a Calvinist or an Arminian?’ “No.” replied Smith, “I know nothing about the man; but, be he saint or devil, he has thrown more light on that epistle, and the whole Scriptures, than I have received in all the sermons that I have ever heard before” (Ibid. p. 164).

Having learned some truth from Campbell, and through his own earnest and prayerful study of the Scriptures, ‘Raccoon’ John Smith renounced the Baptist Church, embraced the gospel of Christ, and devoted the remainder of his life to faithfully preaching it. He influenced many others to turn from error, and without any promise of financial support, labored in love of the truth and converted many precious souls to Jesus Christ.

Soon after he began preaching, some of his friends tried to dissuade him from preaching with so much boldness and warmth. They told him that his more influential Baptist brethren would cease paying him thus putting him hopelessly in debt, and that his farm and home would eventually have to be given up. He replied, “Conscience is an article that I have never brought into the market: but, should I offer it for sale, Montgomery County, with all its lands and houses, would not be enough to buy it, much less that farm of one hundred acres” (Ibid., p. 198). Truly it could be said, that like Paul, he had “lived in all good conscience.”

This unique character was noted for his repartee and wit. A Methodist preacher once asked him, “I’d like to know the difference between your baptism and our mourning-bench.” “Difference?” said Smith, with much emphasis; “one is from Heaven — the other, from the saw-mill.”

Smith left few records of his life and work. He was

humble, never putting a trumpet to his lips to praise himself. His biographer well stated of him, “Unlearned in books, his mind drew all its nourishment from the Book of books; and in his love and knowledge of the Scriptures lay the foundation of all his greatness the secret of his influence and his power” (Ibid., p. 577). He died on February 28, 1868 and his body was laid to rest by the side of his wife in Lexington, Kentucky. Upon a simple slab of marble that marks his grave are inscribed the words: “True, genial, and pious, the good loved, and all respected him. Strong through afflictions, and wise by the study of the Word, he gave up the Creed of his fathers for the sake of that Word. By its power, he turned many from error; in its light he walked, and in its consolations, he triumphantly died.”

The life of “Raccoon” (a definite reason for this nickname unknown) John Smith is the dramatic story of a mans struggle for a livelihood in the woods of Kentucky. But, more important was his struggle for truth in the dense forest of Calvinism, out of which he came triumphant, and became a most influential preacher of the gospel. Like Fanning Yater Tant’s biography of his father, “J. D. Tant: Texas Preacher,” “Life of Elder John Smith” by Augustus Williams will bring both tears and laughter to the reader, and both will remain classics which should be read now and in generations that follow.

Adendum: “Let us, then my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights, but let us come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the light we need.” *“Raccoon” John Smith addressing the meeting in 1832 when the Campbell and Stone groups united.* **LEW**

The Widow’s Mite

In the early to mid-1940’s in the old Washington Avenue church of Christ at Russellville, Alabama, there was a godly Christian woman named Mrs. Yarbrough. Sister Yarbrough was still wearing long dresses of the Victorian era. She possessed precious little of this world’s goods. In fact, her livelihood was a monthly welfare check. But Sister Yarbrough dearly loved the Lord and wanted to contribute to the work of the church. The head of the Welfare Department, Sister Polly Sparks, was also a member of the Lord’s church.

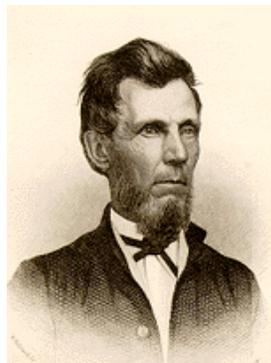
In tears, Granville Tyler would tell about Sister Yarbrough in her declining years. He would describe her in her long dress clumping up several flights of wooden stairs to the welfare director’s office to ask if she could give a quarter out of her welfare check to the Lord.

Remembering Sister Yarbrough’s tender heart is an inspiration to all of us today.....**Hilda Logan**

Scott Harp

One of the most tragic events in the Restoration Movement was when churches began using musical instruments in their worship services. Early in the 1800's all denominations went through many struggles when efforts were made to bring in instruments. As a result divisions arose among the denominations. Sadly this was the case when brethren brought the instrument in as well.

As early as 1851 there were scattered reports of congregations in the Restoration Movement adding instruments of music to their worship services. Alexander Campbell, in an article in the *Millennial Harbinger*, October, 1851 said, ". . . I presume, to all spiritually-minded Christians such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert." Ben Franklin wrote against it in 1860 by saying that it would be only permissible if a church or preacher had lost the Spirit of Christ and were trying to become a fashionable society rather than the church of the Bible. However, in 1860 Lewis L. Pinkerton of Midway, KY responded that as far as he was aware the church at Midway where he preached was the only one of his knowledge where the instrument has been successfully introduced.



The instrument was added amidst much controversy at Midway. The problem there was that the singing was deplorable. Pinkerton said that the singing would, "scare even the rats from worship." At first they met in the home of some brethren on Saturday night for practice. To get the right pitch, they used a little melodeon. Before long one of the sisters was accompanying the singing with the playing of the little instrument. The group **L.L. Pinkerton** noted how the accompaniment helped the singing, and so they decided the use of it would greatly enhance their worship services. They asked L.L. Pinkerton, their preacher, what he thought of bringing it into the assembly. His response was that he saw no problem with it. So, the next Sunday, a melodeon was brought in for worship. Thompson Parrish played the instrument at the Sunday services.

The entrance of this little instrument did not take place smoothly, however. The friction was so stern by some that trouble was a-brew. One who was strongly against the instrument was Adam Hibler, one of the elders. Late one night he, along with his slave, Reuben, came to the building. While Hibler held the window open, Reuben entered the building and passed the small instrument

through to Hibler. They took an axe and chopped the melodeon to pieces there on the front lawn of the church building. Amidst much anger, a new melodeon was placed in the building, again with stiff opposition. So, Adam Hibler again, with the aid of Reuben, removed the new melodeon from the building, this time storing it in his barn. A third was purchased and placed in the building. To this, the acts of righteous indignation ceased.

Around the turn of the 20th century the Midway Church building was destroyed by fire. Along with it was the destruction of the third melodeon. Some years later, Hibler's barn was being cleaned out when the second melodeon was found. It was taken to the premises of the Midway College and placed in the college library. The college has a new library on campus, and the the old melodeon is still on display. The school proudly displays it because of all the controversy it brought so many years before. I have been to the college on two or three different occasions and seen the little instrument. It saddens my heart every time I see it. How could one little piano cause so much devastation among brethren? Of course we know it was not the instrument that caused the problems. It was the unwillingness of brothers and sisters in Christ to stay in the old paths. But then, people have compromised their faith with far less.

The incident at Midway, and in numerous other places in this land, are good warnings to all brethren. Paul said, "*Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, alway abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*" 1 Corinthians 15:58. *Jeremiah said, "Thus says the Lord: Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls."* Jeremiah 6:16



The melodeon introduced at Midway is on display in the library at Midway College, Midway, Kentucky

The Final Say

Reading Isaac's comments and bro. Earl's article about tobacco use in church services reminds us of the following item we recently read. We don't know the church, but this admonition was supposedly posted in an Austin, Texas, church in 1849:

TOBACCO IN CHURCH

Ye chewers of that noxious weed
Which grows on earth's most cursed sod
Be pleased to clean your filthy mouths
Outside the sacred House of God.

Throw out your "plug and cavendish,"
Your "Pig Tail," "Twist," and "Honey-dew,"
And not presume to spit upon
The pulpit, aisles, or in the pew.

AMAZING!

LINCOLN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

The Clark-Showalter Debate in the early 1900's was one of the significant discussions concerning the modern "Sunday School. Clark stoutly affirmed that he did NOT oppose teaching the Bible, did NOT oppose teaching the Bible in classes, did NOT oppose the congregation being divided into smaller groups but DID oppose the ORGANIZATION (i.e. Superintendent, Secretary~separate treasury, self-governing board of teachers, etc.) Showalter denied that such existed among the churches of Christ. Today in Lincoln County, Mississippi, there are thirteen "Churches of Christ," most of whom do not have Sunday Schools, do not have "located preachers," and three or four of them use only one cup for the communion. Lincoln County was the home of N. L. Clark for the last thirty or forty years of his life. There is general fellowship and good-will among all the congregations, whether Sunday School, non-Sunday School, one cup, or otherwise. Clark's memory is still held in highest esteem among the Christians in that area.....*Vanguard 1984*

Impressions

The impressions of childhood are the most lasting. What one learns at a mother's knee during the first ten years of life is often worth more than all he learns in the next twenty years —especially those impressions received while bent over said knee.

Incredulous Indulgences

Recently we were talking to an elderly brother who had just left the congregation where he had been a member for 45 years because of the rank modernism that was being taught and practiced there. Said he: "We just couldn't take it any more." Reminded us of the following: When John Tetzel came into Germany trying to sell indulgences for the pope so that he might finance the great cathedral in Rome, he openly offered the credulous people forgiveness for the sins they might intend to commit. Said he, "come, and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins you intend may be pardoned." (D'Aubigne —History of the Reformation p. 86.) *Martin Luther "just couldn't take it any more, either...LEW*

Amazing Ignorance

It happened not long ago in a Bible class. The preacher was teaching the class and asked if anybody could explain why Paul was chosen to be an apostle when already there were an even dozen men (counting Matthias) filling that office. One fine brother (mature, and a long-time member of the church) after thoughtful deliberation, opined that it was probably so there would be an uneven number, and Paul could break the dead-lock "in case of a tie." (One tends to wonder if such a brother is really held accountable before God!)...*Vanguard*

Modern Wedding

Preacher at the wedding rehearsal: "The groom's stepmother comes in with the groom's father,' next comes the groom's mother with the groom's stepfather. Then the bride's stepmother comes in alone, of course, because the bride's father will be with the bride. And lastly, the bride's mother enters with the bride's stepfather"

This wraps up the second issue of the Journal. Over the years, I was sometimes amused at the brethren who started a new journal always begging for subscriptions. It seemed that they were always "behind the eight ball" when it came to funds to operate. I remember the lamented Foy E. Wallace, Jr. being criticized for always being late in getting the *Bible Banner* in the mail, probably because of a shortage of funds. As the old song says "We will understand it better by and by. Well the by and by is here. Please send in your subscriptions and ask your friends to do the same.....*LEW*

FIFTEEN MILES FROM HEAVEN

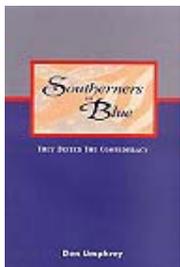
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