



## 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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## OUR COVER

Once again Earl has painted the cover for this issue. He does a wonderful job and has consented to continue painting the covers for the foreseeable future. He is truly a man of many talents. We are fortunate to have him as a part of this endeavor.....

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# 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*



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## EDITORIAL

Recently, I had a conversation with a young man about the church and the problems that seem to swirl around the church in our age. He was so embittered and frustrated that he said the following: "The church has served its usefulness. It is now so steeped in tradition and factions that its effectiveness has long since ceased to exist. It is the same as the denominations around us. It has failed us." I left feeling sad and sorry for the young man, as it appears he has lost his faith. Many of our young people have fallen into the same mindset; seeing the rank modernism that has almost become commonplace in the church; they see no difference in the Lord's church and the denominations that we criticize. They feel as if the church has failed them. The following statement by the lamented T.B. Larimore seems to be appropriate.

### The Church of Christ Can Never Fall

T. B. Larimore

"Kingdoms may be founded, may flourish and may fall; but the church of Christ can never fall, can never fail. Atheism may assail, infidelity may sneer, skepticism may smile and anxious hearts may fear for the safety of Zion but Zion stands secure, backed by the promise of the great I Am that it shall never be destroyed, the literal, living, abiding fulfillment of the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ: 'Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' The sun may be blotted out, the moon cease to reflect light, the stars may fall from the withering vault of night, and the heavens be rolled up like a scroll, and the wreck of matter and the crash of the worlds may come and the judgment day be set; but, when the angel of the Lord shall descend on pinions dipped in the love light enveloping the throne of God and, planting one foot upon the sea and rides upon the storm that time was, time is, but time shall be no more—even then the church of Christ shall stand, secure as the throne of God itself: for our Savior promised long ago, 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;' and Jehovah hath declared 'it shall never be destroyed;' and the Holy Spirit by the pen of Isaiah, the prophet, says: 'The word of our God shall stand forever': so then, whether we stand or fall, whether we do right or wrong, whether we are saved or lost, the church of Christ shall stand, having been built upon this immovable foundation."  
*(T. B. Larimore, Life, Letters and Sermons, Vol. 4*

In this day and age when the church is under attack from without and within, this should encourage us all to press onward and "*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.*" Jude 1:3

....LEW

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### Alabama The Beautiful

Few States have as marvelous a heritage in the restoration movement as does the State of Alabama. Few States have produced as many gospel preachers as has Alabama and according to most surveys, only two States have more churches of Christ than Alabama. These are accomplishments that we can take pride in. Alabama has been home to some of the greats of the restoration. Such men as Tolbert Fanning, T.B. Larimore, John Taylor, the Srygleys, F.D. and F.B., J.M. Barnes and on and on. In later years, Charles Holder, the Brewers, G.C. and Charles, John T. Lewis, Gus Nichols and hundreds of others. All great gospel preachers and all dedicated to carrying the sweetest story ever told to a lost and dying generation. Each of these men had roots in the soil of Alabama or were adopted sons. Brother Kilpatrick, in one of his articles states, "*It is the desire of this writer to help our brethren to understand the work of these men and give these "soldiers of the cross" their proper places in the history of the restoration of New Testament Christianity.*" This is the cause we (the writers) have taken. We want the current generation, as well as the older ones, to know the story of those who sacrificed so much that we can have the opportunities that are afforded us today without the hardships they endured. We have been thrilled at the response we have had to the first two issues of the journal. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your kind words of encouragement and above all for your subscriptions. If you know some of the younger members who would be interested in this wonderful legacy that we have inherited, please inform them of the Journal and encourage them to read it. Brother Earl Kimbrough said to us when we were planning the Journal, "*If these histories are not written and preserved for future generations, they will be lost forever.*" It is and it shall be our purpose to preserve all that we can for others to read, enjoy and learn....LEW

## News & Notes

**Announcement:** We are pleased to announce that Earl Kimbrough has completed his latest book; “**The History of The Church In Russell’s Valley & Northwest Alabama.**” It is being proofed as this is written and we hope to have it available by the end of this year. We have read the draft and can say without reservation that it is a wonderful account of the church in this area from its beginnings until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Earl has truly put together a masterpiece.

Earl has concluded his work on another book, “**The Warrior From Rock Creek.**” This is a biography of the great preacher and writer, F.B. Srygley. This book represents almost a lifetime of research and the gathering of material on Srygley’s life, writings and work in the church. Srygley was the last of the “Old Guard.” His death in 1940 left a void that the church could ill afford. This book will be the defining biography of this Old Soldier of The Cross. Look for both books to be out about the same time. This book will be a must for every Christian’s library as well as every church library.

We have ordered the historic marker for the site of the Alabama Christian College of Berry. It should be delivered this month. Plans are underway for the “unveiling.” Since the next Journal is not due until November, we will not be able to give the details. You may call 205-680-4669 or send us an email ([lw3000@bellsouth.net](mailto:lw3000@bellsouth.net)) to get the time and date.

You will note that we are running a few more ads in this issue. Please support these advertisers as this will help the Journal to defray some of the costs. We will offer a book review section in the future featuring the books we advertise. I have read each of the books we advertised in the first two issues plus the new one in this issue, “*Piloting The Strait.*” I highly recommend each to our subscribers. *Fifteen Miles From Heaven* is a delightful book by Earl Kimbrough. “*Southerners In Blue*” by Don Umphrey is a great Civil War story that deals with many families in Northwest Alabama,; many of whom were Christians. “*Return To The Old Paths*” by V. Glenn McCoy is a wonderful history of the early pioneers of the Restoration Movement. We also list “Books on CD” by Bennie Johns. You can order any of these books from :

**Clay Publishing**  
**P.O.Box 398**  
**Russellville, Alabama 35653**  
or order by e-mail at  
[hjlg@bellsouth.net](mailto:hjlg@bellsouth.net).

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## In This Issue

We begin this issue with an article by *Earl Kimbrough* about the Sevier family in Russellville. Dr. Samuel Sevier was the first New Testament Christian known to have lived in the valley. Earl gives a short history of the family and Dr. Sevier’s contribution to the cause and his influence that continues to this day. *Brother Kimbrough* also takes a lighthearted look at a flareup in the church at Spruce Pine, Alabama An article by Frank Richey about a slave and his loyalty to his master follows. The “They Being Dead Yet Speaketh” column is about one of the great gospel preachers of South Alabama, Thomas Golson, of whom it is said baptized more people than any man in South Alabama, with side stories about his family. Brother Golson was the great-grandfather of Earl’s wife, Rosemary Kimbrough. *Larry Whitehead* has an article about a famous debate and a little known prophecy that resulted. “Minnie Belle” returns to our pages in a story about a confrontation she had with J.D. Tant and a companion story about Tant and the noxious weed, both by *Earl Kimbrough*. *Uncle Isaac* opines about some of the goings on in the brotherhood as he shoots from the hip once again. *Earl* has a great story about a “run in” with the Baptist at Pleasant Site. *Brother Kimbrough*, in a piece about the state of affairs in the Tennessee River valley, offers a prelude to *Brother Kilpatrick’s* concluding article on The History of the Church In Lauderdale County: Post Civil War. An article on “Forgiveness” by *Larry Whitehead* follows. Set during the Civil War, the article gives us an idea of the devastating effects of the struggle on the Lord’s church. *Brother Richey* takes a shot at the tobacco industry in “The Poets Corner.” A biographical sketch of one of God’s servants of years gone by, Brother Asa Plyler fills a second *They Being Dead Yet Speaketh* column. An article entitled “Communion and Contributions by *Brother Chester Estes* is interesting and “F.B. Srygley’s Uncle Joe” by *Earl Kimbrough* gives us more insight into this great family. We print a touching eulogy given by *Brother Kimbrough* to a descendant of Elisha Randolph, one of the earliest gospel preachers in Alabama. A biographical piece by *Brother Scott Harp* about a much loved preacher from the Thornhill community in Marion County is included as a third, *They Being Dead Yet Speaketh* column and an article from *Earl Kimbrough* about the early days of radio preaching in Northwest Alabama follows and an article on a natural wander by *Earl* completes the articles in this issue. We have included a few short notes and stories and *Larry* has the final say. We hope you enjoy.....

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## DR. SAMUEL SEVIER, A FATHER WHO TRUSTED THE LORD

Earl Kimbrough

The first male member of the church of Christ known to reside in Russell's Valley in Franklin County, Alabama, was Dr. Samuel Sevier, son of John Sevier, the famous



**Dr. Samuel Sevier** Indian fighter and first governor of Tennessee. John Sevier, born in Rockingham County, Virginia, September 23, 1745, became a hero of the American Revolutionary War in 1780, when he led an expedition over the Smokey Mountains to defeat British supporters in the Battle of King's Mountain. In 1774, Sevier served as a militia captain under George Washington in Lord Dunmore's War against the Indians. He later won fame as an Indian fighter by leading several campaigns against the recalcitrant Cherokees in East Tennessee. When the so-called "Lost State of Franklin" was proclaimed in 1784, John Sevier was elected governor and served for four stormy years, until the state's collapse in 1788. He was elected to the first U.S. Congress as a representative from North Carolina in 1789. After serving four years in Congress, he became governor of the newly created State of Tennessee. He held that office until 1801. He also served as governor from 1803 until 1809, before returning to Congress where he remained until his death. It is said that John Sevier fought thirty-five battles and won thirty-five victories. His Indian war cry was, "Here they are! Come on boys!" Sevier died and was buried near Fort Decatur, Elmore County, Alabama, in 1815, while on a mission for President James Monroe to help settle a boundary dispute between Georgia and the Creek Indian Territory in Alabama. In 1889, his remains were removed to the lawn of the Old Knox Courthouse at Knoxville, Tennessee, under an impressive monument erected in his honor.

Dr. Samuel Sevier's mother, Catherine Sherrill Sevier (1754-1836), was a frontier heroine in her own right. She married Gen. John Sevier two months before the Battle of King's Mountain, his first wife having died eight months earlier, leaving him with ten children to care for. An account of Catherine Sevier's life is included in an old volume, *Pioneer Women of the West*, published in 1852. "Legend has it that their courtship began after she was surprised by an Indian attack while milking a cow outside the walls of Fort Watauga in northeast Tennessee. The defenders of the fort quickly closed the gates,

[inadvertently] locking her out. She ran to the palisades and, helped by Sevier, climbed to safety. She and Sevier married in 1780, when she was twenty-six, after the death of his first wife, Sarah Hawkins. At their home in Washington County, Bonnie Kate made soldiers' uniforms, cast lead balls for ammunition, and prepared food for her husband's victorious campaign against the British at the battle of King's Mountain in South Carolina.

On the eve of the battle, she thwarted a Tory attempt to murder her husband. Bonnie Kate held the title 'First Lady' three times, first from 1785 to 1788, when her husband was governor of the State of Franklin, and during his terms as the first and third governor of Tennessee, 1796 to 1801 and 1803 to 1809." (The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, Online Edition of the University of Tennessee Press.)

A more romantic account of Catherine Sherrill's marriage to John Sevier is given in a family record. "At Watauga Fort on July 21, 1776, daybreak there were a large number of people gathered there. While the women were outside milking the cows a large body of Cherokees fired on the milkers; but they all escaped to the fort, the gates of which were thrown open for their reception. Among the girls who were milking was Catherine Sherrill, who when she reached the gate, found it shut; but equal to the emergency, she threw her bonnet over the pickets, and then clambered over herself, and as she jumped within, was caught in the arms of John Sevier—her future husband. A warm



**John Sevier**

attack on the fort ensued, during which Captain Sevier thought he killed one of the Indians. The Seviers were in the midst of their big wedding festival when Col. Isaac Shelby arrived carrying the news that Col. Ferguson of the British army would march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders and lay waste the country with fire and sword if they did not desist from their opposition to the British army. Neighbors and friends from far and near were present. Horse racing, barbecue and dancing were in full sway. Upon learning the seriousness of Shelby's visit, the two men withdrew from the crowd and began a three day conference.

Catherine spent her honeymoon making suits for Colonel Sevier and his sons.” (The Sherill’s of Tennessee, a Website.)

After the death of her husband, the “Governor’s Widow” moved to Overton County, Tennessee, where most of her children then lived. But when Samuel Sevier decided to move to Alabama in 1835, her other children having migrated to other places, she consented to go with him. Thus “Bonnie Kate,” the first “First Lady” of Tennessee, spent the last months of her life in Russellville where she died October 2, 1836, at the age of eighty-two. Her earthly remains lay buried there in the Oliver Cemetery in North Russellville for nearly eighty-six years, until 1922, when they were removed to Knoxville to rest beside her husband. The inscription on her tombstone describes her as the “brightest star among pioneer women of this state.”

Samuel Sevier was born on Nollichucky River in East Tennessee June 16, 1785, while his father was governor of the “State of Franklin.” In about 1791, John Sevier moved his family to a place near Knoxville, and after becoming governor of Tennessee, Knoxville, then the state capital, became the family’s home. So Samuel grew up in the midst of frontier politics. He attended Martin Academy and Washington College in East Tennessee. In 1805, he married Jane Rhea, whose family was also prominent in Tennessee history, and twelve children were born to them. The 1820 census of Overton County, Tennessee, lists Samuel Sevier as the head of a household of seven members, besides himself and Jane, one of whom was apparently his mother. The 1830 census shows that he owned one slave. The doctor united with the church of Christ in his fortieth year while living in Overton County, about ten years before migrating to Alabama.

Russellville became the Seviere’s home on June 10, 1835, when they moved to the community from Tennessee. Dr. Sevier bought a house on Gaines Avenue located on a high hill overlooking the village. The original part of the house was built in 1825 by Peter Martin, an attorney who helped with the plat of the Town of Russellville. The house yet stands and is now more than 180 years old. Dr. Sevier was a prominent physician in Russellville for several years. He was a leader in the church of Christ from its beginning in 1842 until his death in 1849, serving as one of its first elders. He left a large family of Christians, who served the Lord in many places.

When the beloved physician died, the following obituary, by Dr. Lewis C. Chisholm, was published in Alexander Campbell’s *Millennial Harbinger*: “Died, at his residence in Russellville, Ala., on Thursday, October 25th, at 3 o’clock a.m., Dr. SAMUEL SEVIER, (son of John Sevier, former governor of Tennessee,) in the 65th year of his life, after an illness of several months, which he bore with calm and Christian resignation. He left, to lament the

irreparable loss, an affectionate wife and eight children—four having gone before, and are doubtless with him in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. He united with the Christian brethren in the year 1825, having been a member of the Methodist Church some six years previous, and for twenty-four years of toil and care fought under the banner of Prince Emmanuel, bearing the persecution and scorn of wicked men for His name’s sake. When he first came to the town of Russellville, at a time when religious prejudice ran high, he boldly and fearlessly spoke of the truth of Primitive Christianity; and succeeded, after encountering much opposition, in collecting together a few persons willing to take the Bible alone, as the man of their counsel, with whom he delighted to assemble, soliciting, at every opportunity, the assistance of other teaching brethren, till by his love and zeal for the glorious truths of heaven, he became instrumental in the conversion of many souls to God. For many years past he performed the responsible duties of bishop, in a manner calculated to gain not only the love and esteem of his flock, but a crown of never failing glory. He was a kind and affectionate husband; a pious and exemplary father. During the whole of the time of his affliction he ceased not to exhort his children to hold out faithful unto the end; and when death came, (for which he had so fervently prayed,) to relieve him of his sufferings, with a smile he folded his arms, commended his spirit to that God who gave it, and breathed his last. Thus, he fought a good fight, finished his course, kept the faith and henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give at that day; and not to him only, but unto all that love his appearing.” (*Millennial Harbinger*, Feb. 1850.)

Samuel Sevier is buried in the Oliver cemetery in North Russellville. Several years ago, I located there his broken and lichen-covered tombstone that held this simple inscription: “Doctor Samuel Sevier, Born June 16, 1785, Died October 25, 1849, Aged 64 years, 4 months, 9 days.” At the time of Tolbert Fanning’s Russellville meeting in 1842, Dr. Sevier’s youngest child was twelve. How many of his children obeyed the gospel at that time is not known, but Dr. Chisholm implied that all of them were members of the church of Christ at the time of the doctor’s death. However, after some years, most of the Sevier family moved to other places, outside of Russellville and Russell’s Valley. The oldest son, John, was living in Franklin County in 1855, but a few years later he was living in Memphis. Archibald Rhea Sevier, the second son, was also living in Franklin County in 1855, and was married to Melinda Chisholm. Dr. Benjamin Brown Sevier, graduated from the University of Louisville in 1839. He spent much of his life in Mississippi, but also practiced medicine at Landersville, Moulton, Russellville, and Belgreen, Alabama. He died in 1890, probably at Belgreen, and is buried near his father in Russellville.

Samuel, Jr. and Jane, the youngest children, were reared in Russellville. Samuel Jr. became a dentist and died in 1879, probably in Mississippi. Jane married Dr. Lewis C. Chisholm and Joanna married Hugh Dickson, who was one of the converts in Fanning's 1842 meeting. While all of these were members of the church in Russell's Valley for a time, only Samuel Sevier's fifth son, Daniel Vertner Sevier, Sr., remained a resident of Franklin County the rest of his life. W. B. "Billy" Norris, a great-great grandson of Samuel Sevier, yet resides at Russellville in Franklin County. He has faithfully served the Lord for more than seventy years with the kind of faith and courage that characterized his great-great grandfather.

Eternity alone can reveal the good for the cause of Christ that springs from the influence of Dr. Samuel Sevier, a devout Christian father of noble heritage who helped to lay the foundation of New Testament Christianity in Russellville and Russell's Valley.

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**FIFTEEN MILES FROM HEAVEN**

Earl Kimbrough

**One Hundred Vignettes Relating to the Restoration Movement**

Stories about Some of the Men and Women Who Pioneered the Restoration of New Testament Christianity in The United States and Others Who Have Continued to Keep the Movement Alive.

One of the most interesting and informative books we have ever read. Includes more than 150 pictures.

Price: \$14.00 pp.

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**A STIR IN THE CHURCH AT SPRUCE PINE**

**Earl Kimbrough**

The Lord's church in the little community of Spruce Pine, Alabama, situated on top of Spruce Pine Mountain about eight miles south of Russellville, in Franklin County, was established in the early years of the twentieth century. Some of the best gospel preachers in that century have filled the church's pulpit in gospel meetings and stated appointments. The beloved John T. Underwood, one of the early preachers of Northwest Alabama and his faithful wife Ira Emma were buried in the old cemetery near the church building. But the best of churches can and do have problems.

"A Subscriber" to the *Gospel Advocate* from Spruce Pine, Alabama, in 1911, wrote the following note to Co-Editor E. G. Sewell: "Brother Sewell: A and B are both members of the church of Christ. A is a dram drinker, and also loans his money at ten percent interest. B refuses to commune with him on the Lord's day, claiming him to be an extortioner. The civil law allows eight per cent. Would you consider A an extortioner? Did B do right in refusing to eat with A?...Please answer through the *Gospel Advocate*, as this has created quite a stir in the church here."

Sewell answered the letter, saying that the dram drinker should be disciplined by the church because he was in violation of 1 Thessalonians 5:22—"Abstain from every appearance of evil." Regarding the brother's charging interest on loans above that which the state of Alabama then allowed, Sewell agreed that his charging interest above the legal maximum "acts upon the principle of extortion, and violates the laws under which he lives." But he said no man should fail to take the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day because of wrong done by others who are communing. (*Gospel Advocate*, Jan. 19, 1911.)

We do not know the rest of the story. But if all the dram drinking brethren in Franklin County in that day were "disciplined," as Sewell advised, it might have extracted a sizeable segment of the membership in several congregations, or it might have created an even greater "stir" in the churches. We would not argue with Sewell's advice, but it would be interesting to know whether the Spruce Pine brethren took it and, if so, what the out come of it was.

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**NO INSINUATION AT ALL**

Which recalls the time when one of J. D. Tant's debating opponents got really upset and very angry because, as he said, "Elder Tant insinuated that I was a liar." To which Tant replied, "he is mistaken, I insinuated no such thing — I said it!"...*Vanguard*

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## SAVED BY UNCLE SANDY

Frank Richey

John Dickie Wade was a member of the church of Christ when it was still relatively new to the regions of North Alabama and Southern Tennessee. He was born in Halifax County, Virginia in 1814, and his great grandson, Wade Pruitt, wrote in his book, "Bugger Saga", that Alexander Campbell baptized his grandfather. (This is unlikely, however. Another record shows that W. H. Wharton baptized him.) John Dickie was well educated, having been graduated from the Mechanical and Agricultural College, in Richmond. As an engineer, he was adept at building bridges and mills, or any project requiring his engineering skills. One of the bridges he built still spans the Tennessee River today.

John Dickie Wade was also a successful farmer. He had a plantation on the state line of Tennessee and Alabama. He named his plantation, "Egypt" because his plantation was so successful in growing corn that people would come to him in "dry" years to buy corn. During the Civil War, cotton prices jumped to \$1.40 per pound. In 1865, he sold \$12,000.00 worth of cotton in Nashville and brought it back home in gold coin, cleverly concealed in a hollowed-out ox yoke. John Dickie hid his money in three places, some under the stairs of his home, some in the graves of his father and mother-in-law, and the rest was in the hollowed out ox yoke, hanging in the barn in plain view.

News of such a large transaction was hard to keep secret and on the night of April 9, 1865, thieves kicked in the front door of his plantation and demanded his money. They resorted to hanging John Dickie in front of his house. As they pulled him up and strangled him close to death, they would then let him down and ask where the money was hidden. This happened several times. This is where the hero of this story enters the picture.

Uncle Sandy was a former slave of John Dickie Wade. When he heard the commotion, he took quick action. The oldest son of John Dickie Wade, who had died in January of the same year in a Confederate prison camp, had owned a bugle. Uncle Sandy sent John Dickie's small son, John, to retrieve the bugle while he rounded up as many relatives and former slaves as he could find in a few minutes. Under Uncle Sandy's instructions this civilian army proceeded toward the house. Uncle Sandy told "Little Johnny" to blow the horn, while Uncle Sandy yelled "Charge, charge them men, give not quarter." At this point the rescuers delivered their most blood curdling Rebel yells, while others rolled rocks down the hill toward the house. The women folks gathered on the porch, yelled, "The Rebels are coming, the Rebels are coming!" The thieves, thrown into confusion, fled, convinced that a more superior force was on its way toward them.

On another occasion, Uncle Sandy and his crew

returned to the plantation home to find a company of Union soldiers on a foraging raid. Uncle Sandy had a surprise for them. He had recently "sacked" a large hornets nest, which he attached to a sapling tree and shot it over into the midst of the soldiers. This Civil War "A-Bomb" was extremely effective in dispersing the foragers.

One of the stories about John Dickie Wade's "golden yoke" was that a man by the name of "Big John Hays" carried off the yoke, but didn't know that the gold had been put in it. John Dickie let time take its course, and waiting until after the war was over, went to Hays and told him that the yoke had been one of the yokes used with a team of oxen that pulled his family's wagon from Halifax County, Virginia. He told Hays that he was interested in buying the ox yoke. A price was finally agreed on and Hays sold John Dickie's gold-filled yoke back to him for fifty-cents.

Because of Wade's wealth and influence, and because of his dedication to the Lord's church, he helped further the cause of the Restoration of the New Testament church in Northern Alabama and Southern Tennessee. This was especially true during the Civil War, when the church all but disappeared in this area. When John Dickie Wade died in 1886, the great gospel preacher and Wade's personal friend, T. B. Larimore wrote the Gospel Advocate to report the death of this man who influenced the spreading of the gospel during his lifetime. Larimore wrote:

*"On the evening of November 14, 1885, our dear brother, John D. Wade, of Lawrence County, Tenn., was caught in machinery in his mill and terribly mangled. One arm was amputated. A few hours after the surgeon's knife had*



*Uncle Sandy's Grave*  
*completed its work, our dear, faithful, suffering brother raised his hand, and, looking at it, said, "I thank the Lord that I have one good hand left-I rejoice in the Lord- O, bless his name!" Such words were to be expected from such a man under such circumstances. These were nearly his last words, his sufferings terminating on the night of November 15, 1885. Brother Wade lived in the sunshine and shadows of earth seventy-three years and ten months, in the bright, blessed light of faith and hope and love in the church of Christ, more than half that time- forty years. Blessed brother, faithful friend, devoted disciple of the Lord -how we love you! How sad the thought-he is gone! We rejoice, even in the midst of sadness, to hear the Spirit*



say, "Blessed are the dead which die In the Lord." (Gospel Advocate, May 26, 1886)

John Dickie Wade was buried in the Wade cemetery near Iron City, Tennessee, on his plantation, "Egypt." Only a few feet away from his grave lies another grave; a grave outlined with large white stones. The stone at the head simply says, "Uncle Sandy." The man that had



served John Dickie Wade was more than a servant; he had been a part of the Wade family. Under the influence of John Dickie Wade, Uncle Sandy was perhaps the first convert of color in Lauderdale County, Alabama, and the work of the Church of Christ in the black comm.-

**John Dickie Wade's Grave** unity began with Uncle Sandy. Uncle Sandy was a brother in Christ to John Dickie Wade.

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### Over-Qualified

The caustic wit of T.R. Burnett once graced the pages of the *Gospel Advocate*, but he was moved from its columns when David Lipscomb felt he had become a bit too sharp in his controversy with the *Christian Courier* and *Firm Foundation*. In 1899, Burnett began the publication of his own journal, *Burnett's Budget*. In an early issue he commented about a preacher from Amity, Arkansas, who had advertised for a job as follows: "if any congregation in Arkansas will pay traveling expenses, I will preach one week. I am a singer; also a political speaker. I am a middle-of-the-road preacher, also a populist? Said Burnett in response, "That will certainly bring a call. If he were horse-doctor and a baseball artist, it would be better still. Also, if he could manufacture chill tonic. Nothing like being 'thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'....*Vanguard* 1982

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### Not Enough Water

Sie McCollum, a former slave was sitting on his porch in Fayette County one day when a member of the church came by and said; "Sie, have you heard the news? Pickens Anthony is going to be baptized in New River tomorrow and wash away all his sins." Sie responded; "Reckin they's enough water in New River? Ya'll might have to take him down to the big Warrior!".... *LEW*

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## JOHN HAYES AND THE MORMONS AT ATHENS

Earl Kimbrough

John Hayes, a student of David Lipscomb and James A. Harding at the Nashville Bible School, moved to Athens, Alabama, in 1900. At the time, he reported that: "There is much work to do in North Alabama, and there are so few who are willing to fellowship [financially support] one in the work. My purpose is to preach the word, and when my brethren fail to fellowship me in the work, I am willing to do other work to support my family, and preach as I am able." (*Gospel Advocate*, Sept. 13, 1900.) Hayes was still living and preaching in Athens more than half a century later, when Bennie Lee Fudge, beloved gospel preacher of Limestone County, said: "John Hayes, the only surviving member of the first class to enroll in the old Nashville Bible School, was eighty-five on October 20." (*GA*, Oct. 28, 1954.)

Hayes' long ministry in Limestone County was a continual and faithful proclamation and defense of the gospel. None ever challenged the truth of God's word in his field without his rising to its defense, when it was within his power to do it. Like Paul, he was set for the defense of the gospel. In 1930, H. Leo Boles received a call from Hayes asking that either he or F. B. Srygley come at once to Athens to debate some Mormon "elders" who were trying to spread Mormonism in that community. Boles could not go, so he called Srygley and passed to him Hayes' urgent request. So Srygley "departed on the morrow" for Athens. He reported on the debate, held at the meetinghouse of a church of Christ east of Athens, but of special interest here is what he said about Hayes. He said the Mormons had flatly refused to debate Hayes, but indicated they would debate another preacher. That is why Hayes called Boles.

Srygley said: "Brother John Hayes is doing a good work in that part of Alabama, and he has been a thorn in the flesh of the Mormons, who sometimes come to Athens and preach on the streets. Brother Hayes always makes it a point to be present to reply to them on the street and before the same audience. Like Paul of old, he disputes with them in the market place. No wonder they dread him, and refuse to debate with him. 'A burnt child dreads the fire.' The Mormons have little hold in that country, and they will not likely hold that long." (*GA*, Nov. 6, 1930.) John Hayes is one reason the Lord's church is yet strong in Limestone County.

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### Rock Creek Philosophy

If there is no hell or devil, it looks like both are needed. What could God do with preachers who have no respect for his word? *F.B.Srygley Gospel Advocate, May 20, 1937.*

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W.T. "Tip" Grider

Thomas Jefferson Golson was born in 1848, near Fort Deposit, Ala. He came from a strong Methodist family and was one himself. He was a man of strong convictions, very honest with himself and others. He was married in 1871 to Mary Ann Johnston at Morganville, Ala., near



**Thomas Jefferson Golson**

McGee's Switch. About four years later he came to Strata and talked to the brethren there. In a few months he came back and obeyed the gospel. This showed Brother Golson did not make snap-shot decisions, but continuously studied the word of God, and then acted

on what he learned to be the truth. His beloved wife was a great help to him in studying and preparing his early lessons. Brother Golson had a gradual growth as a Christian. First he waited on the Lord's Table, and made short talks. Then he began to preach the gospel. Brother Golson was a Dutchman and used the full accent of Dutch speech. This at the first hearing made it difficult to understand all the words he used. He was proud of being a Dutchman and with that splendid natural wit, he was always able to meet anything that might be said about his speech.

Brother Golson believed the whole truth. He proclaimed a full gospel, stressing obedience to every command. He always held up the sad fate of the will of the Lord. It is said that some good sister asked Brother Golson once why he did not preach more of the love and mercy of God, and not so much of hell fire and damnation. On his next appointment he related the conversation. and explained that the Bible still contained all these threats, and he believed them true, as he did the reward of eternal life to the faithful, obedient children of God. He also stated that he had a great fear of eternal fire, and earnestly begged men to obey God and not to be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Brother Golson not only taught clearly and forcefully the first principles of the gospel, but was earnest in his appeal to the church to observe all things commanded them by Christ. He believed and taught that no man could be a Christian without making a sacrifice; that it cost time, effort, and money to be well pleasing to God. He was not afraid nor ashamed to teach and stress a complete obedience to all that God commanded. Brother Golson possibly baptized more people than any preacher of his

day in South Alabama. This convinces me that the positive style of preaching after all is the kind that carries conviction. There was no compromise in any preaching he did. Brother Golson died at his son's, T. J., Jr., in Tharon, Ala., in 1927. So sleeps a faithful and beloved servant of the Lord, waiting the final and glorious day. It can be truly said of him, "He being dead, yet speaketh."

May this feeble effort to write of my beloved brother in Christ arouse many who knew him best to a more active life. May we still remember his plea for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

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**THOMAS J. GOLSON, A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE**  
**Earl Kimbrough**

Thomas J. Golson, whose biography is featured in this issue of *The Alabama Restoration Journal*, is the great-grandfather of Rosemary Cutts Kimbrough, wife of Contributing Editor Earl Kimbrough. Rosemary's mother was Inez Golson Cutts, granddaughter of the pioneer preacher. The Golsons lived at Highland Home, Alabama, not far from J. M. Barnes' school. A note from Rosemary's sister, Anola Cutts Stutzman, says: "Grandpa ran a store and farmed. Grandmama kept boarders. According to family legend, Jessie James once spent the night with them. He slept in the iron bed that became mama's [Inez Cutts], then mine, and now my daughter Marcia's. Grandmama was a lady of strong opinions and deep faith. She had a tremendous influence on mama, and therefore, on me and my children. We rise up and call her BLESSED! Grandmama had red hair, but when I knew her it was snow white—beautiful!"

There are other interesting facts about Thomas J. Golson and his wife Mary Ann (Molly). Some is found in the article, "Grandmama's Copper Kettle," that follows this sketch. Molly Golson shows how much godly women contributed to the Restoration Movement in Alabama. She became a Christian as a result of studying in the Bible what one must to be saved and become a member of the Lord's church. She then taught her husband. She not only led him to become a Christian but encouraged him to become a gospel preacher, resulting in thousands of South Alabamians becoming Christians.

It was the lot of the Golson's to keep the preachers who came to Highland Home. Since their grand- daughter Inez stayed with them often, she came to know many of the great preachers that preached at Highland Home during the early part of the twentieth century. These include the beloved T. B. Larimore, whom she especially remembered fondly. She told about walking to the church hand in hand with Larimore when she was a child and him telling her how much he loved her. She also remembered

Larimore and her grandmother weeping together in the home as they talked about the hard times during and after the Civil War. There are numerous descendants of Thomas J. Golson and his devoted wife Many Ann (Molly) who live in the vicinity of Montgomery, Alabama and in many other places in the state and nation who are Christians today no doubt because of the godly influence the Dutchman who, because of her, became one of the pioneer preachers of South Alabama.

**Addendum.** A note regarding Jessie James may be of interest. Jessie James did not identify himself by name when he spent the night with the Golsons and it was later that they learned the stranger's true identity. Oddly enough, I am distantly related to Jessie James. My paternal grandmother was a James and Richie Hester, in *Forefathers of Franklin County*, refers to Frank and Jessie James being "distant cousins" to Jasper James in Franklin County. My grandfather went to see Frank James when he visited relatives in Northwest Alabama many years after he ceased his outlaw ways. It thus became a family joke that my wife's great-grandparents entertained one of my earlier relatives, receiving him, if not as an angel then as a "stranger unawares."

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### GRANDMAMA'S COPPER KETTLE

Anola Cutts Stutzman,

Molly Johnson was only ten years old when the Civil War began, but she vividly remembered some of her experiences,



**Tom & Molly**

and since I was the same age when she lived with us temporarily, I, too, remember her stories. Her parents had immigrated to America due to the potato famine in Ireland, and she possessed some of the independent "grit" that the Irish were famous for.

The family lived on a farm in southern Montgomery County, Alabama, in the 1860s, and when the war broke out, Molly's father and brothers went to fight for the Confederacy. They didn't own slaves, nor did they believe in slavery, but they were passionate about states' rights, and Montgomery, Alabama, was in the heart of Dixie.

One day Yankee soldiers came to the Johnson's home, supposedly looking for Confederate soldiers the family might be hiding. They "greeted" these helpless women and children by shooting into the house. A copper kettle was hanging in the fireplace, and the bullet pierced

the kettle, allowing the jam that was simmering in it to trickle into the fire. Molly's mother, of course, mended the hole and continued using the utensil for many years.

Another story she told that demonstrated some of her Irish "grit" was about digging a hole near a tree in the front yard and hiding her precious Confederate dollar so the Yankees couldn't find it...and they didn't. Of course, when she dug it up at the end of the war, it was worthless, but she had the satisfaction of outsmarting the Yankees!

Many years later, Molly married Tom Golson, and they both lived and served their God and their family as faithful Christians until they were in their late eighties. He died the year I was born, but she enriched my childhood greatly with her wit, wisdom and love. Molly and Tom were my great-grandparents, and I owe such a debt of gratitude for the spiritual heritage they passed to me.

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### Dinner On The Ground

Larry Whitehead

I always looked forward to each spring when the big meeting would begin at New River church of Christ. After the morning service, we would gather under the big shade trees below the building for dinner on the ground. Tables would be spread with more food than I had ever seen. Fried chicken, ham, chicken & dumplings, chicken & dressing, vegetables of all kinds, biscuits, cornbread, pies, cakes, and it seemed that everyone brought my favorite, banana pudding.

After eating all one could hold, the "grown folks" would sit around under the shade trees visiting and catching up on the latest news. The kids would play in the nearby woods.

Soon everyone would go back to the building for an afternoon of singing, and what singing it was. I can remember three of the song leaders, Floyd Hollingsworth, Cogar Hubbert and Boss Tucker. Boss would come down from the White's Chapel church. He always conducted the singing with a pencil in his hand. I can see him now looking over his glasses as he led the congregation in a spirited number.

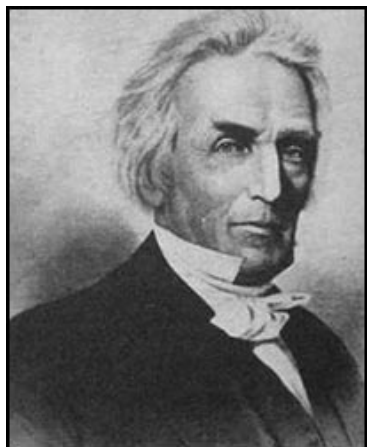
Country folks seemed to enjoy singing more than city folk. They all would join in heartily. No mumblers in the bunch, unlike some of our members today who seem to be afraid to sing. Not so with our country cousins. Amazingly they all were good singers and the sound would ring from the rafters. My grandmother Minnie always kept time with her foot. That may have been where the phrase "a foot stomping good time" originated.

A good time was had by all, everyone ate their fill, the Lord was glorified and surely everyone was edified.

**Just remembering..Jew**

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One of the most famous religious debates ever held in this country, took place in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1837, between Alexander Campbell and Bishop John B. Purcell of the



*Alexander Campbell*

Catholic church. Purcell was the second highest ranking official of the Catholic church in America. He was considered to be brilliant and qualified to defend his doctrine. He was 37 years of age. Campbell was 48 and in his prime. He was an educator, writer, editor and gospel preacher and recognized far and near as a man of no little ability.

In October, 1836, Campbell attended a conference in Cincinnati of the College of Teachers, an educational society founded in 1831 to discuss problems in higher education. The discussion centered on free education for all the citizens of the country and the use of the Bible as a textbook to be used in the schools. Purcell, who was in attendance, objected. A lively discussion ensued with Campbell and Purcell taking opposite views. No accord was reached.

A few days later, Campbell spoke on the subject at the Sycamore Street church of Christ. Purcell was in attendance and Campbell offered him the opportunity to respond. Purcell made a few remarks and stunned the audience with his hard language and blunt terms. The brethren demanded a debate and Campbell, who did not care for debates, had no choice and challenged Purcell to a public discussion. Purcell refused. Later he changed his mind and the debate was to proceed early the next year.

The debate began at 9:30 a.m. on January 13, 1837. The debate ended on the 21st of January, 1837. Some of Campbell's arguments remain classics. He cited all of Protestantism's arguments against the papacy. He dealt with the corruption in the hierarchy of the Roman church and its moral failures. He pointed to the fallacy of the origin of the papacy and Catholicism's place in church history.

Purcell affirmed that the Apostle Peter was the first pope and that the Pope was infallible. Campbell, on the other hand, exposed the church not only for its corrupting influences but pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church "is the Babylon of John, the Man of Sin of Paul, and the Empire of the Youngest Horn of Daniel's Sea Monster."

Campbell made his biggest mistake when he cited

*Ligori*, a Catholic writer, who said that clergy keeping mistresses received fines while marriage led to excommunication. Purcell jumped on this and called for the citation. Campbell could not produce it. He called upon a respected Cincinnati leader who searched for the citation but could not locate it. The debate ended with the citation still undocumented. Campbell ultimately found it, but by then the debate was over and the damage done. Campbell published the quotation in the book and stated that "nothing had given him more pleasure."

Years later – following Campbell's death, Purcell, by then an Archbishop and the leading Catholic scholar in America, in an interview with a journalist, spoke of Alexander Campbell in the most conciliatory of terms. One thing he said – so important in view of the previous controversy – is stunning. He stated that Campbell "never misrepresented his case nor that of an opponent" (cited by Humble, p. 155). (*Wayne Jackson –Christian Courier*)

The debate was published that same year and in its first year of publication sold over 13,000 copies. It became the classic debate between a Christian and a Catholic. The discussion also established Campbell as one of the preeminent writers and religious thinkers of his day.

Archbishop Purcell, writing on the death of Campbell in 1866, said, *"In Mr. Campbell's church the form of worship is very simple as in the days of the apostles. He hoped always to keep it so. Here is where he was mistaken .... As the church becomes great in numbers, and rich and strong, it loses its original simplicity .... We begin to see changes already in some richer congregations in cities. Are not the advanced congregations already discarding congregational singing, and procuring fine organs and hired choirs? Are they not placing flowers in the pulpits and on their altars? has not fine stained glass found its way into lofty windows of their truly Gothic cathedrals?... The church is drifting, drifting away from the apostolic simplicity of which its founder dreamed, and has joined the race all Protestant churches are now making towards something grander and more majestic."*

What a profound statement and a prophetic one! At the time Purcell wrote these words, the Lord's church was in the midst of the battle over instrumental music and the missionary society as well as the rank modernism that was creeping into the larger churches. The net result was division, the creation of another denomination and the destruction of Campbell's dream, just as Purcell prophesied.

The lessons for us today need not be enumerated. And that from an Archbishop of the Catholic church, no less. *Read it, brethren and weep....*

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## MINNIE BELLE AND THE MEDDLING PREACHER

Earl Kimbrough

The venerable J. D. Tant made a tour of churches of Christ in Northwest Alabama in 1922. Among the places he preached was New River in Fayette County where he held a one week meeting. Minnie Belle Ehl attended each service with her children. Tant, well known for his plain speech and often blunt tongue, left a trail of tales wherever he went. He was one of the few men of the day who were hard against tobacco. As Northwest Alabama was well populated with tobacco users, he found many ready made targets in his tour of the state. This added to his fund of tobacco-related tales.

Minnie Belle was a serious Bible student who later converted all three of her daughters-in-law, including one who was the daughter of a well known Baptist preacher and another who had been reared in the Mormon faith. She was also known to be plain and blunt at times. Larry Whitehead says that during Tant's New River meeting, his grandmother "listened intently to the famous preacher from Texas. No doubt, as was her habit, she had her Bible and followed along with each scripture reference. Every thing was fine until the last night of the meeting when Tant condemned the use of tobacco in any form. Minnie had been a snuff dipper since she was a teenager. She loved Bruton's Sweet and always had a small silver can with her. She did not however, use it in the church building or in a public way."



**Minnie Belle Ehl**

"Tant stated that he was especially offended to see a lovely young mother with the filthy juice running down the corner of her mouth. He further stated that he would hate to go back to Texas and when he kissed his wife hello, smell the filthy odor of snuff on her breath. Minnie waited patiently after services while those in attendance thanked Tant for the wonderful sermon. When it came her turn to speak she shocked those around the place where Tant was greeting everyone by saying, 'Brother Tant you've done a grand job this week in preaching the gospel, but tonight you quit preaching the truth and started meddling.' She further said, 'If I was your wife, I'd hate to kiss you with that nasty moustache you're wearing.'" (Letter from Larry Whitehead, June 8, 2005.)

Tant's response is unknown, but it would be pleasant to think that Minnie Belle left the outspoken preacher speechless.

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## A PERSPECTIVE ON TOBACCO

Earl Kimbrough

New River, Alabama, where Minnie Belle Ehl accused J. D. Tant of meddling after a strong sermon on tobacco, was the site of another incident about Tant and tobacco. It took place in about 1921 or 1922. Tant was staying with John Hubbert, one of the elders, and the incident occurred on their way to the meetinghouse, as they were seated side by side in Hubbert's wagon. Asa Plyler heard the story from Hubbert, who like many of his brethren in that country, chewed tobacco. As he and Tant rode along the mountain road, Hubbert got a hankering for a chew. From long habit, he took his plug from his pocket and bit off a sizeable piece.

But just as the good man got the chew "firmly mashed between his jaw teeth," somewhat like the Israelites at Kibroth Hattaavah, who received the wrath of God while "the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed," (Num. 11:33), Hubbert recalled the well known wrath of Tant against the use of tobacco. He told Plyler that "for an instant he hesitated at just what to say or do." He thought that to "cast it aside...would be but to admit in a measure at least that it was wrong, and to attempt to defend his practice would be to try to reason against common sense." To say nothing of trying to reason against Tant, who was so "badly opposed" to tobacco that he had long before honed his wrath and whetted his tongue on the subject.

What is a poor tobacco chewing elder to do in such a predicament? He told Plyler that for a moment he just sat there in silence with the evidence of his crime set in his mouth. Finally, "he regained his courage and turning to Brother Tant he said, 'Brother Tant, what do you think of a man who will chew tobacco?' Without a smile or any signs of a joke, Brother Tant replied, 'Brother Hubbert, I am not nearly so bad opposed to the use of tobacco as some



**J.D. Tant**

people seem to think that I am. I believe that there are other sins just as bad. I do not think that it is a bit worse sin than adultery, lying, or murder." (A. M. Plyler, *Historical Sketches of Churches of Christ in Alabama*.)

Tant might of thought that Kibroth Hattaavah, where the Lord struck his people before they could chew, would have been a better name for New River. It means "Graves of Craving.".....

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### Uncle Isaac Sez

Seems like every time I get some new "church" bulletins, I can't help but notice most of the space is devoted to announcements about a banquet or two or three, maybe a pizza party, a financial seminar, a weight loss program or a CPR class. You can go to church nowadays, eat a fine meal, learn how to invest wisely, register for the soccer team, lose a few pounds and get your heart and blood pressure checked. ....The way things are going, it won't be long 'til you can get a pregnancy test, maybe a haircut, learn how to give a pedicure and get your income tax filed. I think that covers about all you need..... Sometimes a lesson from God's Holy Word might be squeezed in between, say, the haircutting and the pedicure...Don't make it too long, you might be late for the yoga class.....

One of the congregations in North Alabama recently advertised a special series that included the following: "the art of attraction," "the art of courtship," "the art of Romance," "The art of intimacy," They're calling it "Songs of Solomon." Guess ole Solomon aughta know, he with 700 wives and concubines. You can bring the kids if you care to. The charge for kiddie care is \$5.00....Puleaseeeee ....My old gggrandpappy had 24 kids in Fayette County, They must have had some excellent classes on the art of something or other at Old Berea about 1830...Wonder if they had kiddie care back then and what they charged.....May need a series for the unmarried...Might call it the "Swinging Singles Enrichment Seminar"....1 Cor. 7:8 touches on the subject...Need to be even handed, don't you know, and politically correct...No discrimination allowed....Readin' about all these congregations having "Marriage Enrichment Seminars," etc., makes one wonder..Does anybody preach the Gospel anymore? ..I thought that was what it was all about.. Glorifying the Lord and teaching folks how to go to heaven when they die...Besides seems the Bible says something about husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church..Seems to me that's pretty enriching....

Read where one of our largest and most prestigious schools of preaching recently graduated a class of thirty and listed their training to be for "Youth Ministers," "Family Life Center Directors," Marriage Counselors," "Bible School Directors," "Directors of Evangelism," etc. Oh, yes, there were THREE of the thirty graduates in this "School of Preaching" who were planning to be "Gospel Preachers."...Ummm..I can remember when every Godly mother would beam with the idea that little Johnny might "make a preacher".. Must not be as important these days, what with all the big titles about.. Gospel Preacher ain't a big enough title any more.....Have to take a backseat to marriage counseling, I suppose...Saw a new one the other day they can take a backseat to,.....How about "Involvement Minister," ,,,,,Whew!...Somebody please write and let us know, pray tell, what is an "Involvement minister?" Sorta carries with it the idea of ministering to the involved...Might need a companion ministry to the uninvolved....I believe the wiseacre that dreamed this one up needed to get involved...He's got

too much time on his hands.

Speakin about time on one's hands, how about the church of Christ in Michigan that sponsored "Coon hunting for Christ." I believe this tops the list. Whoever dreamed this one up needs to check into a home. He/she needs daily care. I must say this is original with our brethren. Most of the tomfoolery that our folks dream up is aping the denominational palaver we have heard before. I was beginning to wonder if they were capable of some original thought. I don't believe the denominational gurus would come up with something as outlandish as this one. My mind is now at ease.....

See where one of the churches in North Alabama just built a new building with a gymnasium/Life center. To pay for it, they are offering the thing for rent to anyone who has a need for such...Gives a whole new meaning to the word Land Lord..

One of our pet peeves is some of the churches exaggerating their membership numbers. Attended one recently that advertised in one of the directories that they had 750 members...They had the attendance for the morning worship posted as only 225 in attendance...Only 150 or so at the evening service...Seems to me that, as my old Grandmother used to say "that fish don't smell fresh."...They either need to get a new preacher or a new numbers poster or both....Or maybe just lower their numbers to fit reality....

See where the new "Miss America" was baptized into the Lord's church just a few weeks before she was crowned the most beautiful woman in America...Shame somebody didn't mention something about modest apparel to her.. As old brother Josh said.."She came out on the stage 'pert nigh nekkid, fer the whole world to see..Warn't nuthin left to the magination." Maybe the good sister should attend the Manhattan church of Christ's annual fashion show in New York. Only costs about \$15.00...Surely they will have plenty of "modest" apparel on display..After all, it is a church of Christ fashion show....Wonder if they call it "Fashions for Jesus"...

See where more and more congregations have started applauding (clapping) after an event such as a baptism .....Old brother Josh Says the next thing we'll see is hand waving and then a little toe tapping and who knows maybe some foot stomping accompanied by some shouting and maybe a pew or two jumped until we finally arrive at the ultimate show of emotion, rolling in the floor....Josh says these congregations are infected with the "Holy Roller syndrome"....So get your sawdust ready folks...As for me and my house, an occasional "Amen" will suffice.....

Seems many of the churches have bought into the entertainment craze. Concerts, plays and such like have become commonplace. We need to leave the fun and games to the Hollywood types....We don't go to worship services to be entertained.....If we aren't careful, we may find our attitude to be somewhat like the old man who, in explaining why he didn't go to church anymore. He said "I don't believe in going to places of amusement on Sunday.".....Times they are indeed a changing..... Til next time ....ISAAC

## PERSECUTION AT PLEASANT SITE

Earl Kimbrough

Oliver Cornelius Dobbs was born in Coosa County, Alabama, north of Montgomery, April 29, 1875. He was baptized in 1896 by Virgil E. Randolph, son of Jeremiah Randolph, one of five Randolph preachers who pioneered the primitive gospel in several counties of North and Northwest Alabama. Dobbs studied the Bible under

David Lipscomb and James A. Harding at the Nashville Bible School in its early years. He began preaching in 1902 in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. He held numerous meetings and also participated in several debates. In his early ministry, he supported himself by farming, but in his later years he ran the Dobbs Truss Company,



**O.C. Dobbs** which manufactured the Famous Dobbs Truss that he invented. The Famous Dobbs Truss was an appliance for support in cases of rupture or hernia.

Carl Ketcherside said: "Brother Dobbs developed a hernia and in order to contain or control it, cut a piece of material from an old automobile tire, out of which he fashioned a truss. The hernia corrected itself with this assistance. This led him to experiment until he invented trusses for various types of hernia after which he created the Dobbs Truss Company to market his product. Since this was prior to the time when surgery was used for the condition, the company soon became international in scope with representatives in the major cities of the world. During the years when the business flourished Brother Dobbs became quite well-to-do." (Carl Ketcherside, *Pilgrimage of Joy*.) He was thus well able to preach the gospel at his own expense.

Dobbs' field of labor was largely Northwest Alabama, although he also preached in other places. In 1927, he began holding gospel meetings at Pleasant Site in western Franklin County and helped to plant the cause of Christ in that community. His first meeting there was under a tent and his preaching so aroused the sectarians of that region that they tried to stop the meeting. They filed civil charges against the Christian brethren claiming that the preacher's tent had been pitched over the line onto another man's property. The enemies of the Lord's church even had several of the brethren arrested, including Dobbs. But the persecution Dobbs received at Pleasant Site attracted sympathetic attention and resulted in a great victory for the truth. C. C. Burns, writing in the *Gospel*

*Advocate* sixteen years later (1943), said the episode proved to be the downfall of the Baptist church in that community. The Baptist church at the time Burns wrote was small while the church of Christ had gained a large membership.

In 1921, Dobbs held a debate with Primitive Baptist J. T. Robinson at Rock Creek, Alabama. In 1931, he held a meeting at Shady Grove, not far from Pleasant Site, in which twenty-five were baptized. He preached in Northwest Alabama for half a century and baptized thousands of people. Larry Whitehead quotes his grandmother, Minnie Belle Ehl, a devout Christian who heard all the great preachers that preached in the vicinity of her home in Fayette County, Alabama, during her lifetime, as saying, O. C. Dobbs was "*the best preacher she ever heard*." Dobbs should be remembered for his faithful work in proclaiming and defending the gospel of Christ in Birmingham and in the counties of Northwest Alabama.

Several years before his death, Dobbs wrote: "I am now, as you will see, past seventy-seven and am more active in thought than I was in my younger days, I can preach with more ease than ever before. I have never compromised TRUTH with error; I never expect to. (Batsell Barrett Baxter and M. Norvel Young, *Preachers of Today—1952*.)

Death came to O. C. Dobbs December 1, 1969 in his ninety-fifth year. The *Mission Messenger* gave stomach cancer as the cause of his death. He is buried in New River Cemetery in Fayette County near the graves of some of Northwest Alabama's noble pioneer preachers and other Christians, including Virgil and Jeremiah Randolph, J. M. Wade, and John T. McCaleb. Dobbs' first wife was Susan, a daughter of John T. McCaleb.

The persecution Dobbs received at Pleasant Site shows the kind of man he was and the kind of preaching he did. Like all men, he erred in some things, but it was his intent as a preacher to never compromise truth with error. So far as we are able to tell he kept that promise until God called him home.

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### Information Overload

The young preacher rose to ask a question at the Open Forum at Freed-Hardeman a few years ago. Brother Gus Nichols launched forth with a detailed answer in typical Nichols fashion. After several minutes the young preacher, dismayed, said, "I really didn't want to know that much about the subject."

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## FORGIVENESS

Larry Whitehead

The War Between The States was the greatest of American tragedies. Families were divided, often brother against brother and in some instances father against sons. The bitterness and hatred generated by this conflict destroyed communities, neighborhoods and in many instances, families. Friends of a lifetime suddenly became the bitterest of enemies. These feelings continued long after the war was over and in some areas, for generations.

Nowhere did this occur more than in Northwest Alabama and particularly in Winston, Marion and Northern Fayette Counties. As the war clouds gathered, sides were chosen and families were ripped apart. Those who made a stand against secession were chastised and persecuted for their stand. The feelings simmered until the Alabama legislature authorized the first ever conscription law (draft) on American soil and these feelings boiled over. Guerilla bands were formed and raids were conducted, many times by night riders, against citizens of the community. This writer's family was no different. One of my ancestors had 18 grandsons and sons-in-law that fought in the war. They were equally divided, 9 for the Union and 9 for the Confederacy. A further example was the three Wakefield brothers. They each lived on adjacent farms. One fought for the Union and two for the Confederacy. One gave his life in service to the South. My greatgrandfather, Drew Whitehead, served in the Union army while my maternal greatgrandfather, Caleb Ehl, served in the Confederate army. These examples are given to show how families were divided.

Many of the men refused to register for the draft. The Confederate Government authorized a militia, the Homeguard, to hunt these men and force them to serve. A prison (Hartsook) was built South of Winfield and the men, when captured, were placed in this most deplorable place with no sanitation or any creature comforts and were kept there until they agreed to serve in the Confederate army (Wesley Thompson gives a vivid description of the horror of the prison in his book *Tories of The Hills*). This created strong resentment among the populace and served to increase the hatred and bitterness..

The Lord's people were not spared. Congregations were divided and brethren fought against one another. Probably no congregation was affected more than the Berea congregation in Fayette County. Berea was located in the very epicenter of a hot bed of guerilla activity in and around the community of Glen Allen. There was strong sentiment in the community against the war and secession. Guerilla bands were involved in skirmishes on a regular basis and in some cases murders were committed in cold blood. So deep were the hatreds, that unspeakable atrocities were committed. Barbarism was the order of the day and man's inhumanity to man on full display.

The leaders of the church were also divided. Andrew McCaleb, an elder, was an outspoken Union man. His son, John Tyler McCaleb, who would later serve as an Elder, served in the Union Army under General James A. Garfield, himself a Gospel Preacher. His brother in law, Robert Logan, one of the charter members, was also a Union loyalist. Seven of Logan's eight sons fought with the famed 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry-USA and the eighth built bridges for the Union Army.

Three of McCaleb's brothers joined the Confederate cause. Alexander McDonald, a prominent member at Berea and the father-in-law of two of the McCaleb brothers, was also for the Union and was hanged by the Homeguard for his activities. He survived the hanging. (*Report of the Southern Claims Commission..1871*). Another, a future Elder, Newman T. McCollum "hid out" for much of the war and was finally captured and forced to serve in the Confederate army. Several members of the Hollingsworth family served in the Confederate army, whereas, the Joseph Whiteheads were Union loyalists. Andrew Jackson Tidwell and his family were also Union Loyalists and long time members at Berea. The Lauderdale family was divided also, with many on each side. The Perry family sided with the Confederacy. The Anthony family, while not all members of the church, were divided in their loyalties. It is believed that the Thorntons were sympathetic to the Southern cause while the Morris' loyalties are unknown. They may have been able to stay above the fray, although this is doubtful. The Randolph family did not go untouched by the conflict. Jeremiah was a Union loyalist. His son, Montgomery Campbell was hanged in Missouri for his activities on behalf of the Union and another son, Madison Asberry served in the Union army. Lorenzo Dow Randolph's family was divided in their loyalties. (*Records of H.C. Randolph*) All of this points up the deep divisions within the leadership as well as the members at Berea. It is not known whether the church continued to meet during the war. An educated guess would be that they did not. It would seem likely that, with the membership so divided, the congregation would not have been able to function. While the war raged on, several of the members moved from the community, never to return.

With feelings so deep and bitter, one would think that the congregation would not be able to survive and would implode under the weight of the conflict. However, after hostilities ceased, the church came together and within a short time was meeting on a regular basis. Personal feelings and the old hatreds were evidently put aside. It is this writer's guess that much forgiveness was asked for and given by all concerned. Several years ago, I was interviewed by Dr. Margaret Storey, a prominent historian



at Loyola University, concerning my views on how the people in the community were able to come together after such a horrible conflict. I stated that “ many were members of the church of Christ and loved the Lord and one another. That they asked each other for forgiveness and it was apparently granted.” While she did not report exactly what I said in her book, she did mention the comments and showed the sentiment that I intended.

When one sees the conflicts between brethren in our modern age and the hard feelings that often ensue, one needs only to look back at the example of these good brethren and realize how insignificant and foolish some of our actions and feelings are. They had just come through the most horrible conflict that the world had ever endured, yet they put aside their feelings and loved the Lord and each other enough to put the church above all else. It is hard for one to imagine how personal and deep seated these feelings were. They had witnessed the very darkest side of humanity. Many had lost loved ones in the conflict. Some had lost or would lose their homes and property, yet for the good of the cause and for the salvation of their souls they were willing to forgive. One can only imagine the tears of sorrow and of joy that must have flowed as these brethren, realizing their shameful state, came together and renewed their commitment to the cause they loved so much. What a wonderful example for us and what a lesson that our brethren so need to learn. The lessons are numerous and of a certainty make many of our differences seem petty by comparison and especially our attitudes toward one another.

The Berea church experienced its greatest growth over the next few years. Jeremiah Randolph held a gospel meeting for them a short one and a half years after the war and reported forty six additions; thirty six by baptism and ten by confession of wrongdoing. A month or two later Simeon Randolph reported in the *Gospel Advocate* that the Berea church was meeting regularly with one hundred ten members.

Berea went on to become one of the most influential churches in Northwest Alabama and a powerful voice for truth. Several congregations were begun by members from Berea who either moved into the various communities and began meeting according to the old paths or planted churches in other areas through their missionary efforts.

Since most, if not all, of the members at Berea were ancestors and kinsman of this writer, I take special pride in their commitment to and their love for the Lord and each other and their possessing that most noble of attributes; a willingness to forgive. All these make up the wonderful legacy that they have handed down to us.

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#### **Rock Creek Philosophy**

Sometimes subtractions are more important than additions. (*Gospel Advocate*, June 29, 1939.)

## **THE WAR'S TOLL IN THE TENNESSEE VALLEY**

**Earl Kimbrough**

*The War Between The States was the greatest tragedy to ever occur in American history. Its economic impact is still felt today in areas of the Old South, 155 years after its ending . It stands to reason that it had a major impact on the Lord's church. Brother Kilpatrick gives an insight into this in the article that follows: **The Church In Lauderdale County-Post Civil War.** Christians in NW Alabama, especially, were divided. However for most of them, they came together afterwards and were able to forgive each other.*

*Brother Thomas Butler made a tour of the South, including North Alabama and we offer his report as a prelude to Brother Kilpatrick's article on Lauderdale County....LEW*

People today who enjoy the pristine beauty of the Tennessee River Valley as it meanders through North Alabama, astride the great watercourse, can hardly imagine the devastation that four years of the War Between the States wrought upon that land. A few witnesses have tried to describe it, often colored by bitter tears and anguished words. Perhaps none portrayed the destruction more graphically than Thomas D. Butler, a Yankee Christian who traveled through the war torn land by railway a year after General Lee's surrender at Appomattox; He left a vivid record of his impression of the war's effect on that part of the Tennessee Valley that favors the counties of Northwest Alabama.

Butler's journey ran from Louisville, Kentucky, to Decatur, Alabama, near the middle of the valley's deep southern arc, and then to Memphis, Tennessee, through Tuscumbia, Alabama. Describing the landscape to the west, Butler said: "From Decatur we traveled 100 miles through the Northern part of Alabama. There might have been more desirable and inviting lands through the South, but I have rarely seen a richer and more beautiful tract of country than that extending from the Tennessee River to Corinth, Miss. The population of the region seems like 'a few souls' saved from a tornado, which, far and wide—co-extensive with the rebellion, swept with the scourge of death. Florence, Alabama, once had a population of 2,000; now it contains 100 souls. The same (or nearly the same) retrogression might be shown at Franklin, Columbia, Pulaski, Springfield, and other towns in Tennessee,—Athens, Hillsboro, Courtland, Jonesboro, Tuscumbia, Cherukee [sic]...and other towns in Alabama along which I traveled. The ruins of happy homesteads are piled in solitary heaps, and the trail of the war is broad, deep, and black. The hammer, axe, and saw are dexterously applied to the work of reconstruction within the former lines—the woods are paying heavy tribute for fencing, and the lands are being rapidly enclosed with millions and millions of rails." (Christian Standard, May 5, 1866.)

Butler did not address the spiritual condition of the region's churches, but his picture of the land might figuratively apply to them, both as to the ruin of the war and the struggle to recover.

## THE CHURCH IN LAUDERDALE COUNTY

Post Civil War 1866-1880

C. Wayne Kilpatrick

No pen can properly describe the chaotic conditions, which prevailed in Lauderdale County, Alabama just after the close of the Civil War. Alabama had only been admitted into the Union in 1819 and was hardly out of the pioneer stage when war came in 1861. The demoralization brought on by invading armies, the derangement of the labor system by the sudden emancipation of the slaves, the depression sustained in their loss as property, the shock of disappointment at the failure of the Southern arms – all these conspired to produce deep and universal gloom. For once, society was launched upon a wild and stormy sea of disorder. Men and women wept in the midst of crushed hopes. Soon the weather-beaten Confederate soldiers began to return to their homes to find prevailing the wildest disorder. But the Confederate brought with him the same spirit, which had carried him through hundreds of battles. He exchanged the battlefield for a field of cotton or corn. This was a period of distress and gloom, which was not relieved by the events of the immediate future, as we shall later see.

This great period of gloom was felt greatly by the Churches of Christ in this county, also. These churches had just gone through the most traumatic period of their history. The task of attempting to tell how our brethren functioned as the Lord's body during these dark and bloody years, at this point in time, seem almost impossible. These were the silent years of the Restoration Movement, concerning history. The religious historian is left to pick his way, and gather up the fragments of history as best he may.

Since this fragmentary information will not justify a discussion concerning the war, we shall restrict ourselves to discussing the period covered from 1866, the end of the war, through 1880, one of the most eventful years for the church in Lauderdale County, during the nineteenth century. This was a period of recovery and expansion. A new force was given to the Restoration Movement in this area with the coming of T.B. Larimore and the establishment of Mars Hill College. T.B.



**John Taylor**

Larimore, J.H. Dunn, John Taylor, and J.M. Pickens, along with others, salvaged the war torn churches in this county and nursed them back to a healthy growing stage. The twentieth century Churches

of Christ may have been virtually nonexistent without the aid of these great men immediately following the war. It is the desire of this writer to help our brethren to understand the work of these men and give these "soldiers of the cross" their proper places in the history of the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

In order to prepare such undertaking, many sources have been consulted. Local newspapers of the period, local courthouse records, church record books, journals of historical societies, unpublished histories and biographical sketches aided greatly in this task. Several books written by our brethren and literature of other religious groups have been helpful. Some historical collections of the brotherhood have rendered valuable aid to this work, but the chief source of material has been found in brotherhood journals. Sometimes even private conversations and tombstones have proven a useful aid to this investigation. Such are the sources from whence this history is derived. It is hoped that new light shall shine upon the understanding of the Christians of Lauderdale County, Alabama, by the uncovering of this information.

### Post Civil War Conditions Of The Church

The country along the Tennessee River was hotly contested ground during the Civil War. The river, in connection with the Mississippi, opened direct steam-boat transportation to the base of supplies for whichever army held possession of it. By holding the Tennessee, the Confederate Army could reach the rich agricultural regions of west Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and communicate with such important supply-centers as Paducah, Memphis, and New Orleans. With this same facility the Federal Army, if in possession of the river, could reach Paducah, St. Louis, and all ports along the Ohio River. For this reason the Tennessee Valley was one of the great battlegrounds of the Civil War, second only to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Each army managed to possess the transporting supplies and munitions of war over it. The armies moved back and forth across the river so that the country was almost constantly a battleground.

Lauderdale County was a part of this perpetual battleground. The war set the Lauderdale County brethren back a few years, as compared to many years in other Alabama counties. During the four years of war, some of the churches were either completely disbanded or suffered heavy membership loss. Before the war, three organized churches and two "house-churches" were in existence. Liberty, at Gravelly Springs (formerly known as Bartons), had built a building in 1848 and had a membership of 85 members, with James Young serving as minister. During the Civil War the Union Army camped near Gravelly

Springs and, upon leaving, burned any public buildings that could be used to house troops. The Liberty church building must have been destroyed in this burning spree, because in 1880 Brother M. Askew traveled through Gravelly Springs, on his way to Savannah, Tennessee, and preached there. He found no organized church, nor any building in which to preach, except the Popular Springs Methodist building. One can only conclude that the Civil War destroyed both the Liberty Church and building. The



**Murell Askew**

Bluewater congregation, another Church attended by James Young, was never mentioned in records after the war, however, it is highly possible that it was the forerunner of the Antioch congregation. John Taylor had already preached in this area many years before 1870, therefore it seems likely that John Taylor preached here sometime before and during the war. Another pre-war church was Stoney Point. This Work had begun in 1823, as Republican, under Ephraim D. Moore. The congregation numbered over 100 in October of 1860. The war hindered many brethren from traveling very far for worship, so part of the Stoney Point congregation had begun to congregate in the Mars Hill vicinity. This new congregation became the Hopewell Church of Christ, and by May 31, 1868, they had bought the building from the Methodists. J.H. Dunn preached occasionally at Hopewell, as well as at Stoney Point and in the Middle Cypress community. Upon his first visit to Hopewell he writes:

*Hopewell is situated on the Military or Nashville Road four and a half miles north of Florence. It is a neat, well-finished frame house, of good size.*

It was to this congregation that T.B. Larimore came to hold a meeting in June of 1868. The brethren didn't think Larimore preached good enough, so they took him cross county to Brother Young's (Thomas W. Young) house to preach. Larimore wrote of this event at Hopewell:

*They let me try to preach once, and they were so well pleased with that 'sarmint' that they let me off – suddenly! This meeting closed with a jerk and a bang. . . It was wound up for eight days and it ran down in an hour. . .*

Brother Andrew Gresham drove Larimore, in a buggy, to Thomas Young's house. The results of Larimore's trip to the Young's was the establishment of the Middle Cypress congregation, from what had been, up until this time, a "house church."

Another "church house" known to exist before the war was at Lexington. In August 1844, R.D. Randolph wrote Tolbert Fanning begging the brethren from

Tennessee to stop and preach to the brethren at Lexington. Randolph says the brethren are "few." In 1875, there was no church at Lexington, not even a "church house"; they were all Missionary Baptist. The war was possibly the cause of the early Lexington work to fail, or perhaps the failure of the early brethren to secure preachers, discouraged them, and caused the church to die.



**T.B. Larimore**

Whichever be the case, the Lexington work was dead.

By observing the foregoing facts, one can see that the church in Lauderdale County was still left in better condition than in most counties of Alabama, or even in other states. Two things seemed to

be caused by the war among the churches in Lauderdale County. One was that some churches died; and two, that some larger congregations were broken up into smaller new congregations, such as Hopewell from Stoney Point – which was probably caused by restricted travel of any distance during the war. These two things were both good and bad- good in the sense that other communities saw rise of new congregations and bad in that some communities that badly needed churches lost theirs. Thus the Civil War did affect the churches in Lauderdale County, Alabama.

### **Road To Recovery**

Lauderdale County had been without a resident minister from the departure of James Young in 1850, until the coming of Larimore in the summer of 1868. This is most evidently shown by the absence of any minister for the churches of Christ in the census of 1860. There were five Baptist, four Presbyterian, and thirteen Methodist ministers in Lauderdale County, but no minister for the churches of Christ. J.H. Dunn and John Taylor had held the churches together during the war and continued to be the life-giving force in the struggling congregations until Larimore's arrival in 1868.

J.H. Dunn had help organizing a new congregation of our brethren near the present-day Mars Hill community in 1867. This was the Hopewell Church of Christ. On May 31, 1867, Andrew Gresham and John A. Thompson bought the building from the Methodist Church. This was the first congregation established in this county after the war, and it contained members from the Stoney Point church. It is most likely that the restricted travel during the war, aided its establishment. Just a few weeks before the organization of Hopewell into a church, John A. Thompson had traveled with John Taylor and J.M. Pickens to Columbus, Mississippi for a "Consultation and

Co-operation Meeting” to “discuss the scattered forces, to impart fresh courage, and to bring to bear all available means for the promotion of the cause of Christ. Early after the war, Hopewell seemed to be designated to be the leading church in Lauderdale County, perhaps because of the leadership of men like Andrew Gresham, who had served as an elder at Stoney Point before 1860. Upon Gresham’s death in 1874, Larimore wrote:

*It would be hard indeed to find a more faithful brother, a truer friend, or a purer Christian. His whole soul seemed to be perfectly absorbed by the great work of salvation in which he had engaged.*

With men like Gresham, the congregation had the potential to be a leading force in this area.

Another reason the congregation was a leading force might be because of its location. It was situated on the main route between Florence and Nashville, thus making it easily accessible to be reached by any of the preaching brethren coming down from Tennessee.

It was this very route that Larimore took on his way down to preach at Rock Creek in Colbert County, in the summer of 1868. After the meeting there, he went back to Hopewell for a protracted meeting. Larimore’s reception has been described earlier in this work. The brethren at Hopewell felt that Larimore did not have enough experience so they sent him across the county to the Middle Cypress community, which resulted in a permanent work which is still strong today (1980). A twist of fate occurred at Hopewell. Soon after Larimore established the school at Mars Hill, Hopewell disappeared from written record, probably swallowed up by the work at Mars Hill, which had been started by the “inexperienced preacher,” Larimore. Mars Hill was situated not more than a half mile across the field from Hopewell as Srygley described it – “*not more than a stone’s throw from Hopewell.*”

Upon leaving Hopewell in June 1868, Larimore did preach in the Middle Cypress community and managed to secure the Baptist’s building, in which to preach. Larimore reflected upon the meeting:

*. . .What teachers and preachers came out of that meeting. That was a wet nest, and the house was a ‘Hard Shell’ house; but some wonderful birds were hatched then and there. . .I am drifting – before the Providence. Mattie, George, Bennett-these are some of the converts made at that meeting.*

The Mattie of that last sentence became Mattie Y. Murdock, who taught school at Enis, Texas, and who wrote several articles in brotherhood journals. George was George P. Young, who became president of Orange College, Stark, Florida, and Bennett was W.B. Young who became a prominent preacher also. No wonder Larimore said: “*Hopewell sent me to the right place.*”

Jasper Wilson, a member of this newly formed congregation wrote concerning this meeting:

*We were as sheep scattered without a shepherd. Bro. T.B. Larimore preached for us on the third Lord’s day in June. We organized with about 22 members.*

In exactly two months the congregation grew to thirty-eight members. Wilson expected the number to reach a hundred in twelve months. The record book of this congregation still exists to the present day and contained in its first entry, these words:

*In the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight, on the 21st day of June, we the undersigned, by permission of the Baptist (formerly known as the old Iron Jackets) met at their house of worship, known as Little Cypress Church, and had preaching by Brother T.B. Larimore and organized a Christian church to be known by the name of.*

The entry was signed by seven men who contributed much to this work.

In 1869, on June 21, it was entered upon the record, that the congregation was to be called the Middle Cypress Creek church. On December 2, of that year it was decided to build their own building. The land was donated by Thomas W. Young, father of Mattie, George, and Bennett. Upon completion of the new building, the congregation was to be called Bethabara. This name has been handed down to the present in the corrupted form of “Bethel Berry.” The record book is filled with names of persons baptized, who did the baptizing, and persons from whom fellowships had been withdrawn. Some financial statements are contained therein, and sometimes a re-numbering of the charter membership. Also there will be found a clue to its contribution to the kingdom.

This congregation contributed much to the Lord’s work in Lauderdale County and its influence was felt in several states. Mattie Young taught in Mississippi and Texas, George P. Young started Orange College in Stark, Florida, and W.B. Young preached in Alabama, Tennessee, and Missouri. The Jasper Wilson family moved to Arkansas and started a Work and the George Smallwood family, along with the John D. Wade family, moved to Iron City, Tennessee, and helped establish the Antioch Work. Only God knows how many more states have felt the influence of this little band formed on a stormy night in the summer of 1868.

Even though Larimore had come to Lauderdale County, he left temporarily to teach at Mountain Home Academy near Moulton, Alabama, which was under the leadership of J.M. Pickens. Larimore taught there for the fall session, and then taught for six months in west Tennessee in Mansell Kendrick’s school. He left there and taught at Stantonville, Tennessee, for ten months, and returned to Florence, Alabama. On January 1, 1871, he opened Mars Hill Academy. Larimore had gotten the idea for Mars Hill while teaching at Mountain Home Academy. The founding of Mars Hill was the founding of a new era in Lauderdale County church history and was

proof that this area was well on the road to recovering from the war.

### Expansion

Now that the church in Lauderdale County seemed to be nearly completely recovered, it was time for the church to march forward. With the founding of Mars Hill in January of 1871, and the founding of a North Alabama brotherhood journal, the *Christian Monthly*, just one year before, by J.M. Pickens, of Moulton, Alabama, things were looking up for north Alabama, and especially Lauderdale County.

In January of 1871 Pickens advocated a consultation meeting for North Alabama. He said that the meeting should be at a convenient time and place for the purpose of "entering more vigorously and generally upon the work of evangelizing and building up churches" in north Alabama. The new proposal for society work, the Louisville Plan, had been called to the attention of J.M. Pickens, and as he was opposed to societies, no doubt he desired to warn the north Alabama brethren. In July of that year he strongly opposed the Louisville Plan at Columbus, Mississippi. The stand Pickens took probably saved the north Alabama churches, which included the Lauderdale County churches, from the Missionary Society. On this thought Larimore wrote:

*I propose to never stand identified with one special wing, branch, or party of the Church. My aim is to preach the gospel, do the work of an evangelist, teach God's children how to live, and, as long as I do live, to live as nearly an absolutely perfect life as possible.*

With Larimore's influence, he could have perhaps swayed many away from the society, had he taken a stand against it.

The Lauderdale churches were in existence, and continued to grow without the aid of a missionary society. Preaching on weekends by the boys from Mars Hill played an important part in the growth of older works, and establishment of new ones. Concerning this, Srygley wrote:

*Through such preaching, churches were established in almost every neighborhood in the country for many miles around the college.*

Larimore also wrote concerning this point:

*Our school boys are working faithfully and successfully at their various preaching points in the vicinity of Mars Hill. Veteran soldiers of the cross are astonished at the power displayed by mere boys who, twelve, or even six months ago, did not think of ever reading a chapter in public.*

He went on to illustrate his point by reporting twenty-three additions to the congregation at Blackburn's precinct, just six miles from Mars Hill. These additions were the results of just one Lord's Day's labor.

The preaching of the gospel in this county, fell upon Larimore and "his boys" during the latter part of the

"Seventies." Old brother J.H. Dunn, who would travel from Limestone, for many years, labored with the Lauderdale churches. He died June 14, 1877. Old John Taylor had ceased coming to Lauderdale County by the end of the decade because of old age and ill health. New preachers were badly needed, and Larimore's Mars Hill answered with the training of many preachers, young and old. Doyle Mills, of the Bethabara congregation, was over fifty years old when he enrolled for the first time at Mars Hill. Many very young men came to Mars Hill also, included was F.D. Srygley, the author of *Larimore and His Boys*.

Another channel of teaching in Lauderdale County was the *Gospel Advocate* and the *Christian Monthly*. Concerning the brotherhood journals, one brother wrote:

*I have never seen people (Missionary Baptist of Lauderdale County) more devoted to reading and searching for the old landmarks, and I assure you that your papers (Gospel Advocate) and those of our brotherhood are aiding them greatly in getting a true understanding of the scriptures.*

The reading of these brotherhood journals did take its toll amongst the Missionary Baptist of Lauderdale county. A brother M. Askew had left the Missionary Baptist in 1876. Askew was for sometime considered one of the Baptist's foremost preachers. About the year of 1863 some of his brethren concluded that he was tinctured with what they termed "Campbellism," and threatened to prefer charges against him for preaching baptism, because he contended that the sinner could not claim the promise of the pardon of his sins except through baptism. He had proposed an investigation with any man or committee of the subjects in controversy. They refused. At the Association in 1874 the body charged him with preaching Campbellism. When questioned about what he taught, he answered according to the New Testament. They requested him to quit teaching that doctrine. He told them he would quit preaching "alien baptism," during the next year, if they would then discuss the subjects in controversy; they still refused and in September 1875, when the Association met, they would not let him be heard on the subject, because the church where his membership was sent him as a delegate, and sent its letter under the name of "church of Christ," without the Missionary Baptist added to it. The Association withdrew fellowship from the church, because it kept Askew as pastor. The other three churches, for which he preached, also divided, and adopted the name church of Christ. They agreed to take the Scriptures only as authority. Upon this action these four churches, under Askew's guidance, left the Indian Creek Association, and became New Testament churches. The leading congregation of these four, was Union Grove, where Askew was an enrolled member. This congregation survives today in the name of North Carolina church of Christ.

To aid these new congregations, J.T. Wood, Wm. Comer, and other brethren attended a meeting at Union Grove in order to help the newly formed congregations withstand the Baptist. This meeting occurred in July 1876. Wood compared the agitation amongst the Baptist, and the turning of many of their ranks to the New Testament church, to the revival in the early 1800's in Kentucky.

He wrote:

*There are large numbers in this country moving out of Babylon with good and substantial leaders or teachers at their head, so that the day is at hand when doubtless many will say, 'why as I thus.'*

Larimore also took advantage of this turmoil amongst the Baptist and in 1880, he converted the whole Macedonia Baptist church. The church immediately dropped the name Baptist and called themselves "Christians" and formed the "Macedonia church of Christ." This church continues to be one of the strongest churches in the county, even today in 2005.

It seems as though the Baptists had anticipated these troubles; because in 1870, the Muscle Shoals Association had adopted a resolution similar to that of 1830 against the immersion of Pedo-Baptist and Campbellite Societies. The document read as follows:

*Resolved, Therefore, that we, the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association of North Alabama disapprove of the validity of all such immersions as set forth in the above preamble, and as an advisory council, advise our churches carefully guard against all such intrusions, as emanating not from the word of God, but from a show of false charity so rife in the world, whose tendency is only evil, and that continually.*

Little good did this resolution do the Baptists of Lauderdale County. They became second in numerical strength in the 1870's and remain so far today.

The church at Lexington, Alabama was growing, also, at the expense of the Baptists. J.R. Bradley helped establish the Lexington work in 1876 and held several meetings there. In 1876, Bradley preached eight lessons in one meeting and baptized four. Other preachers helped the work at Lexington; among them were two former Baptist ministers-R.W. Officer and M. Askew.

As churches, such as Lexington, were being formed, others were weakening, and some were dying. One such church was Hopewell. Even in 1869, Larimore, perhaps unknowingly, pointed out a weakness at Hopewell. He wrote:

*This congregation is small, but devoted to their Master's cause. They never learned to wait for the preacher to come around to serve the Lord from them; but, like valiant 'soldiers of the cross,' they are ever at their post. They meet every first day of the week, preacher or no preacher, and spend usually, three hours or more in teaching the children, reading the Holy Scriptures, 'exhorting each*

*other in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.'*

The weakness was their numerical strength. They never seemed to grow in number. After the death of Andrew Gresham in 1874, who was an elder at Hopewell, the congregation was absorbed into the congregation at Mars Hill College.

Another work near Mars Hill was not the strongest church in the county, yet was very stable. This was the Stoney Point congregation. Srygley relates an amusing incident at Stoney Point concerning one of the "Boys" at Mars Hill. George P. Young was a man very big in stature and was looked upon by the students at Mars Hill as a "big preacher." Young took several students along with him to Stoney Point, on the Lord's Day in 1876. They were ready to hear the "big preacher of the school." Young could not find his sermon outline after getting up to preach. After several frantic attempts to make it materialize, he gave up and dismissed the congregation. When they returned much too early, compared to previous trips, Larimore asked the students why they were back so early. One student remarked: "Mr. Young just put the thing right through." Young's failure at Stoney Point didn't discourage him; later he became a fine preacher.

Soon after Young's failure at Stoney Point, another Mars Hill student, C.F. Russell, preached and baptized six persons on one Lord's Day. Srygley described Russell as "one of Mars Hill's brilliant young preachers." Later failing health hindered what may have been a brilliant career for Russell. Others came in manner of Russell and Young and kept the little band at Stoney Point faithful.

Another church was established, not more than six miles from Stoney Point, during the seventies. W.B.



**E.A. Elam**

Young, the brother to George P. Young, had gone to school at Bethany College. During the summer recess of 1875, he returned to Bethabara community, which was his home. He traveled to Burcham Valley, due west of modern day Central Heights, and preached in Burcham Valley School house. As a result of Young's preaching, the Concordia Church of Christ was formed with eight members. Within the next week another three were added to the number. This congregation would later form the nucleus for modern day New Hope Church of Christ, which is the congregation from which E.H. Ijams came forth. The countryside around Burcham Valley and Stoney Point was filled with people seeking the truth.

Much has been said about the country churches, but nothing has been said about the city work, Florence in

particular. The chief reason for this is because there had been very little or no work in Florence by our brethren, since Tolbert Fanning's attempt to establish a Work there, before the war. The first real solid work was at a factory location, in the North Florence area. H.H. Turner established a church at the Martin Factory (Cypress Mills) on Cypress Creek in North Florence. He began this work in 1878 with a few scattered members, meeting in their homes. In 1879, they began meeting twice a month in a union house. The work grew slowly. In April 1880 Turner helped re-organize the Florence brethren into a congregation, promising to meet every Lord's Day, "if not in the Union House, then in homes." William Stephenson was selected elder, and Thomas Rackard was selected deacon. At this time there were twenty-two members congregated at Martin's Factory. Preachers were supplied from Mars Hill. One such preacher was E.A. Elam, a graduate of Burritt College, who was teaching at Mars Hill. Elam wrote of the status of the Florence work stating:

*Our two brothers and most of the sisters (I am indeed sorry that all do not feel the vast importance of attending*

*weekly meetings) constitute a faithful little band of disciples. They have the moral courage to stand out on the 'Bible-along' side the midst of very strong prejudice. Some of the young sisters have been told by their fashionable friends that they have withdrawn from society and excluded themselves from the world, because they possessed true heroism and*



*firmness enough to choose rather to serve the Lord than to attend balls and other places of fashionable amusements. If they continue, they will not be excluded from the society of heaven.*

Though small in number the Florence Work seemed determined to endure.

In May of that same year, R.W. Officer came to Florence and held a meeting in the city hall. T.C. Biles, another local preacher, also preached in this meeting. The Florence church was now poised to grow. Not only was this true of the Florence Work, but also of the county, and entire section. Someone wrote concerning the north Alabama churches:

*The cause is on better footing now than at any time previous in that section of the country.*

The work in Lauderdale County, indeed, was on good footing and was so much demonstrated by the new works coming into existence. One such new Work was the work at Brush Creek, near Killen, Alabama. J.R. Bradley, a Mars Hill student, preached in a grove on Brush Creek, on the first Lord's Day of July, 1880. The small band was

compelled to leave the Union House, by the Methodist, which Bradley says – "was built for a free house." In August, Bradley and M.A. Beal, another Mars Hill "boy" baptized twelve at Brush Creek. This work flourished and is the forerunner of the Killen Church of Christ.

Another congregation in the rural area was Salem church. It was located about six miles north of the Mars Hill community and in the Blackburn precinct. In June 1878, Larimore wrote that his "boys" had baptized twenty-three in Lord's Day preaching, in the Salem congregation (Blackburn's precinct). Larimore only referred to the work as "a preaching-point." In 1880 it was referred to as "Salem church." J.R. Bradley and J.C. McQuiddy held a protracted meeting, beginning on Saturday before the second Lord's Day in October 1880. In July of that year, Bradley had reported that he had baptized five at Salem. This would lead one to conclude that the church was organized before 1880, probably in 1878.

About this same time, near the same community, and located on the L&N Railroad, the Piney Grove congregation had its beginning. H.H. Turner sent a report to the *Gospel Advocate* concerning this church. His letter was dated August 9, 1880, and he stated as follows:

*I preached at Pine (sic) Grove Church, Lauderdale County, Alabama, (where I preached once a month) the fourth Lord's Day in July, four added.*

This work apparently was very weak. William Behel tells in his autobiography of a Baptist preacher named Duckett, who taught school at Piney Grove. Duckett announced that on a certain Sunday he would organize a Sunday School. Behel tells how Duckett appointed him superintendent of the Sunday School. Now Behel would have normally attended at the Oak Hill congregation, but for some unexplained reason, he attended Piney Grove that day. He took the lead and brought the little band together every Lord's Day upon New Testament principles. This was in 1892. He gives this as the date for the organization of the Piney Grove work. They met for about twelve months in "an old dilapidated building without windows, but logs cut with no shutters, with plenty of ventilation through cracks in the log wall." The possible explanation for the organization of the Work in 1892 may be contributed to the fact that Turner had mentioned that he only preached for them once a month. Could it be that the Piney Grove church had only been meeting once a month? What ever be the explanation, one thing is for sure-Piney Grove was the forerunner of present-day Mount Zion Church of Christ.

Other works were started over the county by 1880. One was the work to which R. W. Officer vaguely alludes in a letter to the *Advocate*. He mentions a work at M. Askew's house where he (Officer) preached on a Lord's Day and baptized seven. He informs us that Askew lives ten miles down the Tennessee River from Florence. This

would be near Smithsonia. There is a black congregation there in modern times, but it is not connected with Askew's work. Just what the fate of Askew's congregation was, no one knows.

Another work similarly vague in circumstances was mentioned as having been started by Granville Lipscomb in 1871, at Rogersville. It seems that the work soon died. No further mention was made of a Rogersville work until after the turn of the century.

There were other signs of expansion in the growth of the Lauderdale County brotherhood, also. One such sign was reflected in Larimore's work at Mars Hill. In September of 1874, Larimore had made up his mind that Mars Hill College needed to be expanded into a university which would be known as the University of Mercy, Love, Peace, and Truth. He had A.C. Bruce, Architect, to draw the plan for the University to be built at Mars Hill. The Advocate reported that the proportions of the building were "enormous, equaled by nothing of the kind heretofore in the South." Srygley said that Larimore had even gone so far as to have the site cleared for the university. Larimore even started a paper, which bore a name similar to the university, Angel of Mercy, Love, Peace, and Truth. The paper was to be used for raising funds for the project. It failed and so did the dream of the university.

During this same period, when Larimore was thinking of building the university, his friend, J.M. Pickens of Lawrence County, Alabama, was thinking of another enterprise, which would be of benefit to the Lauderdale brethren, as well as the rest of north Alabama. He had his mind set upon building a publishing company to be known as Southern Christian Publishing Company. Lipscomb wrote concerning Larimore's and Pickens' enterprising proposals:

*What, with Brother Pickens' great 'Southern Christian Publishing Co.' and Brother Larimore's 'University of Love, Mercy, Peace, and Truth,' North Alabama will soon become the most erudite portion of our country.*

One wonders if there was not a tinge of jealousy in the words of Lipscomb concerning the bright looking future of north Alabama.

The brightness began to fade almost immediately. Larimore's effort had already been declared a failure and by October of the same year Pickens announced his plans for the publishing company; he sold it. It seems that Pickens was a very impulsive man and his actions were executed in a rapid fashion, sometimes to his sorrow later.

One final action by Pickens brought a stir of excitement to Lauderdale County and the rest of the state in 1880. He announced his candidacy for Governor of the state, and would run on the Greenback Party ticket. He was nominated by the party in June 1880, when they met

in Montgomery for their state convention. In the fall election, Pickens polled only 42,363 votes, against 134,908 for Governor Cobb. Had Pickens won, it would have brought more prestige to the Alabama brotherhood. This was the reason that the Lauderdale brotherhood wanted Pickens elected. It was a beautiful dream – but Pickens failed.

Not only did Pickens fail, but it looked as though Mars Hill Academy was failing also. For the school year 1879-1880, Brother Robert McKnight, the fundraiser, had secured only half the amount needed to sustain the school. Larimore was so downcast that he announced plans to close the school at the end of 1880 and that he would no longer be a part of Mars Hill. He had said he would "sell all" he had; "pay all" he owed; "seek a home in the far West," if he would be able to get there. Not all was bad at Mars Hill in 1880, however. Out of fifteen "aliens from the common-wealth of Israel" who had begun the school year as students, thirteen were baptized. By the end of October, Larimore had a change of heart and decided to remain at Mars Hill and keep the school open. Larimore's decision to stay gave the Lauderdale County brethren seven more years to enjoy the services of "Larimore and his boys." Much good was to come from the remaining years of Mars Hill. This could help the brethren get their feet planted solidly in nearly every Lauderdale community. No wonder most brethren today believe that Larimore established the church of Christ in this county- his work did establish many and helped save the ones already there when he came.

### **Conclusion**

In spite of the trauma of the Civil War and the depression that followed, the Lauderdale County churches managed to grow and become the strongest in the state. No other county in Alabama can boast of having more congregations of the Lord's church than Lauderdale County. Most modern congregations can trace their early beginnings back to some work established by Larimore, Dunn, Taylor, or some of the young preachers from Mars Hill. Srygley aptly named his book about Larimore with the co-title, *Smiles and Tears*. It took both smiles and tears, along with much prayer and hard work to bring the Lauderdale County churches to where they are at presently. Alan Bryan once remarked, in a chapel talk at International Bible College in Florence, Alabama, there was no other place on earth where so many Christians per square mile could be found than Lauderdale County, Alabama. Without the industry of our brethren between 1866 and 1880, there might not have been a Church of Christ in this whole county. We owe so much to those brave souls of that great period of restoration history. May we never forget.....

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In the mid 1940's Brother Asa Plyler made an extended tour of Alabama gathering material for a book he intended to write on the history of the Restoration Movement in Alabama. He interviewed many of God's own who have long since departed. The book was to be entitled *Historical Sketches of Churches of Christ in Alabama*. For a number of reasons, the book was never published. His family has generously shared a manuscript with the writers of this journal and the reader will note references to his work in many of our articles. Brother Plyler had a unique and wonderful writing style. His sometimes flowery prose is fascinating and beautiful to read.



I never had the privilege to hear him preach but I have a tape that he made when in his 87<sup>th</sup> year. He had a deep, rich voice that was most pleasant to listen to, even at that advanced age. The following are excerpts from two articles written by Brother Sewell Hall and Brother Plyler's son-in-law, Brother Gilbert Alexander, about this Godly servant. ..LEW

**Asa M. Plyler**

**68 Years—Sowing the Seed**

Marching through the pages of Restoration history is a long column of farmer-preachers—men who worked their fields by day and preached the gospel by night wherever listeners could be gathered. As a rule, they were not illiterate; some were very well educated. Most read widely and many were writers who sprinkled their articles with knowledgeable references to the Greek and Hebrew texts. Regardless of what else they knew, they knew “the book” from which they quoted lengthy sections to support each proposition stated. That column of men has narrowed almost to a single file of veterans carrying on the tradition. One morning, several years ago, my father and I were visiting brethren in Walker County, Alabama. We stopped in at Asa Plyler's farmhouse about 11 a.m. He had already spent several hours in the field and had come in for lunch. As I recall, he was reading the *Gospel Guardian* which had just come in the mail and he was planning to begin writing an article in the afternoon before returning to finish the day's farm work. We were warmly welcomed, sumptuously fed and thoroughly edified by our discussions concerning God's word and God's people. As we left, I recall remarking to Dad: “I feel that I have just experienced a page in the life story of one of the last real

pioneer preachers.”

Asa Plyler has lived all of his life within two or three miles of his present home except for time spent as a student in the old Alabama Christian College, established in 1912 and operated for several years by Hal P. McDonald and Gus Dunn in Berry, Alabama. Returning from school, young Plyler resumed his farming but spent many summer nights preaching in farmhouses, in school buildings, in tents or brush arbors in communities near his home where the Lord's church did not exist. His home county and two adjoining ones together now claim a total of almost 100 churches of Christ, several of them in communities where he first preached. Preachers were scarce and for years he filled monthly appointments on Sundays. As churches multiplied, he held meetings for them. He was widely enough known to be selected a board member of Montgomery Bible School (later Alabama Christian College) in Montgomery, but his preaching continued to be done mainly in those three counties nearest his home.

The Plyler home itself became something of a school. Early in the 1930s he began conducting classes for young men in the area who were interested in preaching. Several able preachers, including his brother, Woodrow, received their first training there.

Such a man will not be appreciated by everyone. Worldly people sometimes cursed “Old Asa” as he drove by or as his booming voice rang out through his hollows preaching and singing the gospel. But when they needed him for comfort in time of bereavement or for material help in time of need, he suddenly became “Brother Plyler” and they did not hesitate to call on him; nor did they call in vain...*Sewell Hall*

**A Memorable Character**

Passing his old weathered white farmhouse which he and his sons built, one may see him sitting on the front porch in his overalls, reading a book; or perhaps one might see him wearing an old, battered felt hat full of holes, hoeing his garden in the early morning hours. One would hardly picture him to be a preacher, writer, music teacher, and former college board member.

He is truly a man of honor, integrity, and dignity. He has devoted his life to a cause for which he has made great sacrifices, willing to suffer loss of popularity rather than compromise that which he believes to be true. His strength of belief has undoubtedly led to the simplicity and humble station of his life. Asa Monroe Plyler is a one—model, rough—cut, hill country southern gentleman, independent, one of a rare, diminishing breed..*G. Alexander*

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## CONTRIBUTIONS & COMMUNION

Chester Estes

*Over the years, brethren have adopted some "strange" ways of doing things. Brother Chester Estes gives some examples from the early 1900s at places where he preached:*

"There have been many ways of "taking up a contribution, and I suppose all of them are alright unless some principle of the Scriptures is violated. I remember preaching "out from Nashville" in the 1920s and that a contribution box (it might have been a cigar box) was at the rear of the auditorium. The contribution was made by the members as they came in or went out of the building. The best I recall there was about \$3.00 in the box the time I was there and they gave it to me to pay my "travel expense."

*Another location where he preached he noted:*

"The contribution was taken up by the ushers passing a net on a long handle along in front of the people on the seats. The nets were something like the nets used to catch insects, or dip nets for minnows."

*Estes recalls one of the churches in Marion County, Alabama in the 1920s:*

"I remember that about the time I began preaching in 1922 the contribution was taken during the singing of that last song after the Lord's Supper at the White House church in Marion County, Alabama. During the last song the men who contributed would walk down the aisle and lay their coins on the table. The women would put their coins on the bread plate while it was being passed for communion. I do not remember seeing anyone give a dollar bill during my early days of preaching. It was usually the "buffalo" that went to church.

### **Communion:**

"In those days I had never heard of the church using the "individual cups" when partaking of the "wine." It was sure enough wine. I remember that when the individual cups were introduced some people would object to the use of such and to be accommodating the brethren would sometimes put a large cup or glass in the middle of the individual cups. I saw no difference unless it was that the objector just had a larger cup. I remember when the individual cups were introduced in the church meeting in the auditorium of David Lipscomb College in either 1923 or 1924, and that there were a few objections.

Another practice comes to my mind. A cluster of men would often sit out front somewhere and talk (and thump gravel) until the song service was well under way before they would go into the house for the service or "to worship." Then when the Lord's Supper was being served some of them who considered themselves 'unworthy' would slowly and reverently walk out of the house, go back to talking and thumping gravel again until the service was dismissed."

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## F. B. SRGYLEY'S UNCLE JOE

Earl Kimbrough

Major Joseph W. Srygley was born at Hillsboro near the Tennessee River in northeast Lawrence County, Alabama, August 22, 1822. He died at Landersville in the same county, March 20, 1904 at the age of 81 years. He is buried in the cemetery near the meetinghouse of the Landersville church of Christ seven miles west of Moulton and not far from his home. Major Srygley became a Christian in 1842, being baptized at the age of twenty by Carroll Kendrick, one of the earliest pioneer preachers of Northwest Alabama. J. W. Srygley's nephew, F. B. Srygley said: "He obeyed the gospel at a time when people were persecuted for their faith, but he lived to see a great change come over his community." By the time of his death, the Landersville church was a thriving and influential force for apostolic Christianity in the central part of Lawrence County. There were also strong congregations at Moulton and Russellville.

According to F. B. Srygley, Major Srygley held some "peculiar notions on religion" in the later years of his life, which some excused on the ground that "in his old age he was set aside as a leader of his brethren" and that "the continuous [religious] warfare of early life made him love controversy." Srygley said: "Uncle Joe had many noble traits of character. He never yielded his conviction one hairbreadth on account of the notions and opinions of others. He was perfectly willing to stand alone on any question; in fact he seemed to enjoy this distinction....He was a public-spirited citizen. He gained the title 'Major' in the old master days before the Civil War. When the war came up, he was opposed to it; in fact, he held with the Union, but did not bear arms against his neighbor. He was never molested during the war, but always spoke his sentiments freely in favor of the Union." (*Gospel Advocate*, May 14, 1904.)

Love of controversy may have nestled in the Srygley genes. Both F. B. Srygley and his brother F. D. Srygley, who died in 1900, were in constant battles with denominational error. F. B. Srygley remained a constant warrior for the truth, apparently relishing the role like his "Uncle Joe, until his death in 1940. He once said: "Truth can stand controversy, but error thrives better at rest in a dark place." (*Gospel Advocate*, April 6, 1933.)

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### **College Preachers**

If a Bible college education is essential to being a gospel preacher I wonder why Christ went to the Sea of Galilee to get his preachers instead of the great college at Athens.

*J.D. Tant*

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Poet's Corner

**Those Who Dip And Chew**

There seems to be a fad today  
Sweeping 'oer the land,  
Dictating that we dip and chew  
Copenhagen, Skoal,...Red Man.

How is it then that we know  
Who it is who takes a dip?  
Just look for the swelling of the jaw  
And a ring on the blue jean hip.

Look for the "worm dirt" between the teeth  
And for one who needs to spit,  
And has to spatter liquid matter  
Filled with grime and grit.

And after spit has left the mouth,  
Look for the little drip,  
Upon the chin and around the grin  
That leaks from side of lip.

Look for the one who carries a cup  
Or perhaps he carries a can,  
And as he sits, therein he spits  
And reveals he's a macho man.

Look for the browning of the gums  
And spots on the side of his truck,  
And never fear, lest standing near  
You forget to duck.

And don't forget yellowed teeth  
And the smell of dead dog's breath.  
And give an inch to miss the stench  
Which could bring an early death.

And if by my words you have heard  
And to the question received an answer,  
Remember to, that to dip and chew  
Can to your mouth cause cancer.

**Frank Richey**

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**Rock Creek Philosophy**

If there is no life after this, it is hardly necessary to worry  
much about this life. *F.B. Srygley (Gospel Advocate, 7/25/29)*

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**Yes, Indeed**

Then there was the brother who thanked the Lord "that all things is as well with us as all things is, considering the surrounding circumstances by which we are surrounded with. . .*Vanguard*

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## ENLOE BRUSTER BILLINGSLEY

(1911-2006)

Earl Kimbrough

*(Note: The following memorial was given at the funeral of Enloe Billingsley at the building of the East Bay church of Christ, Sun City Center, Florida, on March 20, 2006. Enloe was buried with military honors in the Florida National Cemetery at Bushnell. He lived a few days beyond his ninety-fifth year.)*

People in this life move in concentric circles of ever-moving and overlapping areas of responsibility, cares, and influence. At the center of those circles is the person himself. The primary realms in which he moves are economic, domestic, civil, social, and spiritual. How one behaves in all areas of his life depends on the attitude of his heart. With regard to others, some are selfish, some are evil minded, and some are indifferent. With the true Christian, the center around which all of his duties, cares, and influences revolve is his Christ-centered life. Christ dwells in his heart by faith and guides him in all that he does. "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my pathway."

Because he was first a Christian, all that Enloe Bruster Billingsley did was done from a Christian perspective. He was a successful businessman, managing several Newberry stores for some thirty years, in such places as Tampa, Birmingham, Tulsa, and Detroit, as well as operating some fabric businesses of his own in later years. He interrupted his business interests and family life to loyally serve his country in World War II. His service was in the Pacific theater of war, which including the Philippine Islands. He was on board a ship bound for the invasion of Japan when the atomic bomb ended the war. There is no doubt that such an invasion would have resulted in the loss of many thousands of lives. In the providence of God, he was spared that dangerous mission.

The Newberry stores that Brother Billingsley managed were known in those days as "five and ten cent" stores. It was in his transfer to a store in Tulsa that he met, wooed and won Henrietta Marie Woodworth, who was working in the store at the time. I believe that Enloe is the only man I ever knew who really found a "million dollar baby in a five and ten cent store." We are glad that he did for she was a blessing to his life and their family, and to our church family, as well. Marie is herself a descendant of Samuel Woodworth, the famous eighteenth and nineteenth century American poet and song writer, who among the hundreds of poems and songs he wrote, is best known as the composer of the melancholy and nostalgic song, "The Old Oaken Bucket." It begins with the words: "How dear to the heart are the scenes of my childhood, When fond recollection presents them to view!" And ends: "The old oaken bucket, The ironbound bucket, The

mass-covered bucket That hung in the well." Many of Woodworth's songs were of a religious and spiritual nature.

It was about a year ago that I went with four brethren to the small and remote Randolph Cemetery located on Randolph Mountain in Fayette County, Alabama, in search of the grave of Elisha Randolph. The little family cemetery is down what is now a very steep, curvy, and dangerous logging road, and is so over-grown that it is hard to find when you know where it is. Elisha Randolph was one of the first pioneer preachers to bring the ancient gospel of Christ to the mountains of North Alabama at about the time Alabama became a state. He held weeklong camp meetings and succeeded in establishing some small churches of Christ in Morgan County in about 1825, before moving to a greater work in Fayette County in the early 1830s.

It was not until after I visited that hallowed spot, that I learned that Elisha Randolph was the great-great grandfather of Enloe Billingsley. There were five Randolph preachers among the pioneers of Alabama. Elisha had three sons and a grandson that also preached: Jeremiah, Lorenzo Dow, and Simeon, were his sons and Virgil was his grandson. Elisha Randolph's daughter, Anna Mariah Randolph, married Jephtha Billingsley prior to 1832 and produced a family of nine boys and one girl. Anna Mariah Randolph became the great-grandmother of Enloe. The Randolphs are responsible for thousands of people becoming Christians and they established many churches in the mountains of Northwest Alabama, including Mount Pleasant church at Millport in Lamar County where Enloe was born and where he became a Christian and worshiped God in the early years of his life.

But Enloe's kinship with gospel preachers does not end there. There were several Billingsleys that also became gospel preachers, one of the most well known of a past generation was Price Billingsley. And as if this were not enough, Enloe's mother, Martha Lucretia Black, belonged to another family of gospel preachers, including V. P. Black who yet lives, and I believe would be a cousin of Enloe. So at least three branches of Enloe's family were rife with gospel preachers, and Marie thinks Enloe himself would like to have been one. And he certainly preached the gospel effectively by the life that he lived and the example that he set for those around him.

I consider it a distinct honor and a great privilege to have been a friend of a great-great grandson of Elisha Randolph. Through him we can see how the influence of the primitive gospel can continue in a family through more than five generations. I was talking to Enloe one day about the old Alabama Christian College that operated

near his home at Berry, Alabama, in the early part of the twentieth century and he told me that his mother boarded boys who attended the school. His mother was a godly woman and had a great influence on her seven sons. Some of those boys she boarded also became well-known gospel preachers in Alabama.

We can know something of the nature and character of a person by considering the roots from which he came. Brother Enloe Billingsley was a God-fearing man, who put Christ first in his life. He loved the church and loved to assemble with the saints to worship God. The lives of the members of the East Bay church have been blessed the last several years by Enloe and Marie becoming members of this little congregation. He was truly a great and good man, who bore the character marks of his pioneer ancestors. He brought joy to others by his always cheerful disposition. I regarded him as a very good friend and a dear brother in Christ, whom I expect to meet again in a land of eternal bliss just beyond the dark river. Our children loved him and Marie dearly. Kylie was always happy to go with us when we went to visit Enloe and Marie. We will miss him here and we sympathize with his family in his departure after a long and useful life. But as Christians, we sorrow not as others who have no hope.

Brother Duncan, Brother Brake, and I have tried with these Scriptures, prayers, remarks, and songs to honor the memory of Enloe Billingsley, as well as to, hopefully, bring some measure of comfort to his bereaved family, and above all, to glorify God in whose hands we all are.

The songs we have sung today themselves tell the story of Enloe's life. "The Old Rugged Cross," reminds us that it is through the death of Christ on the cross that he received the remission of his sins through his obedience to the gospel and his continued faithful service to Christ as long as he lived. "Precious Memories" lets us know that even when death parts us from our loved ones, we can still keep them with us in our memories. And "Beyond the Sunset" turns our minds to the great eternity that awaits us all. We can know by faith that, one glad day, there will be a grand reunion with all of the redeemed who died with their faces toward the New Jerusalem.

If we could speak to Enloe now, we would say, in the words of the poet:

Servant of God, well done!

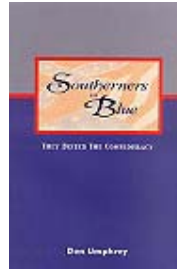
Rest from the loved employ.  
The battle fought, the victory won,  
Enter thy Master's joy.

The pains of death are past,  
Labor and sorrow cease,  
And Life's long warfare closed at last,  
Thy soul is found in peace.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Restoration pioneers who faced tough choices



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### **Paying The Preacher**

I remember preaching one time at a place where it was the custom to give the preacher what was "put into the box." This was one Sunday afternoon. I knew I would get what was in the box, so I was very liberal and put in a dollar. After the service I was given the contents of the "box"—which amounted to \$1.05. My sermon must have been worth a nickel. Of course, I have heard sermons since then that I considered not being worth that much—that should never have been preached. One thing for sure, if I had put more in that box that day I would have received more...*Chester Estes..The Faith That Overcomes*

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Back Benchers**

"I advertised fifteen front seats in the church house for sale during the meeting as all the members rushed for the back seats and no one to occupy the front seats. After forty years travel I have yet to find my first back seat church member who is any benefit to building up a church, or any back seat driver any help in running a car. Ninety percent of complaining against my preaching brethren generally comes from back seat members."..... *J.D. Tant*

\*\*\*\*\*

Scott Harp

John Dossie Stone was born November 17, 1890 in Fair Play, South Carolina. He married Lillie Pearl Dees January 9, 1909. Together they had two children, Bonnie and Talmadge. He moved to Northwest Alabama and lived in the small community just out of Haleyville called Thornhill. While in this area Dossie, as he was called, came under the influence of G.A. Dunn, Benjamin Harding, and



**Dossie Stone**

numerous other preachers of that day. Brother Dunn baptized Dossie in July, 1911 in Haleyville.

Two years later he preached his first sermon at Haleyville, starting on a path that would endure with him the rest of his life. His training was through the mail, as he received Correspondence Courses from Ashley S. Johnson, the great Christian educator of East Tennessee. To help support himself in life, he learned to work on radios and televisions, which kept him busy six days per week. But on the first day, he did that which was his passion, preaching the gospel. He was the preacher at Thornhill from 1913 to 1934; at Acipco, 1949-1951; and later at Oak Grove, Delmar in the early 60s. Between 1945 and 1950 he produced a weekly radio program on Birmingham's WKAX, entitled "Gospel Truth Program." Then he conducted a thirty minute radio program for a few years on Haleyville's Radio Station WJBB every Sunday morning at 9:00am, sponsored by the Oak Grove Church of Christ. Incidentally, Churches of Christ in the area have continued to produce a thirty minute program every Sunday morning, since that time that continues to this day. While in the Birmingham area, between 1945 and 1949 he published a brotherhood journal called, *The Fighting Preacher*. He preached Gospel Meetings all around the area.

The preaching career of Dossie Stone never took him beyond an eighty mile stretch between middle and northwest Alabama, but the respect and love of the masses in that area was truly great. He was a man of God who preached the faith once delivered to the saints until his death May 21, 1970. He was laid to rest in the cemetery at Thornhill, in a special plot given to the family in recognition for his labors, across the street from the main cemetery.

I have a personal appreciation for the life and work of Dossie Stone. His influence was felt not only in the area of

my birth, Haleyville, Alabama, but especially with my family. My grandparents, Ralph and Bernice Harp, knew Dossie Stone, and they grew up under his preaching. He performed their wedding ceremony in 1936. Some of my ancestors are buried in the old church cemetery there at Thornhill near the grave of Stone, including my great, great grandfather, W.D. "Big Dad" Fell, and his father, M.A. Fell who died in 1920.

- Most of the information from this sketch came from Preachers Of Today, Vol. 2, ed. Batsell Barrett Baxter & M. Norvel Young, *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, TN, c.1959, p.423

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**Faithful "Hound"**

*Chester Estes reported on a gospel meeting he conducted in 1930s:*

"There was a neighbor's dog that attended every service of the meeting. He was, perhaps, more faithful than some of the members. I do not know whether it was because he liked my preaching or for some other reason, but every night he would lie down in front of me on the 'stage' and remain there during the service. Because I thought that he was attracting the audience away from my preaching (something did), I undertook the task of removing him from the stage, but he became vicious. So, I let the 'live dog lie' and listen to me each night."

\*\*\*\*\*

**Ah! The Brethren**

A sign on a church building in Arkansas a few years back: "Opposition Church of Christ"! Which reminds us of the old-timer who was approached by a young newspaper reporter. "Well, Old-timer," said the reporter, "I guess you've seen lots of changes in your day." Replied the octogenarian, "I shore have, Sonny. And I've been opposed to every last one of them!"...*Vanguard*

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**GRANDPA'S ARTHRITIS**

Then there was the grandfather who was suffering from arthritis. He remarked to his grandson that he hoped the weather would turn warmer, as he felt so much better when it was hot. He was a bit shaken, however, when he heard the little fellow close his nightly prayer with, "O God, please make it hot for Grandpa!"

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## RADIO EVANGELISM

### Earl Kimbrough

In the 1930s a new avenue of evangelism came to the churches of Christ in Northwest Alabama. The first licensed radio station in the Muscle Shoals area began broadcasting in November 1933 as WNRA, "The Voice of Muscle Shoals." The call letters were changed to WMSD in 1936 and WLAY in 1942. The formal opening of WNRA took place the first of November. Jerry Landrum,



who was instrumental in beginning station, in describing the formal opening of the station, wrote: "One famous person that I put on the air that night from the WNRA studios was a young singer, Sonny James, from Hackleburg, Alabama. This was the first time that Sonny ever appeared on radio. I introduced him, along with his family as the Loden family from Hackleburg." (*Journal of Muscle Shoals History*, 14/142.) Sonny James, who became legendary in country music, was a member of the Hackleburg church of Christ.

Within three years after the first radio station came to the region, the gospel was being preached over the airwaves in a radius that included Franklin County. The pioneering church and preacher in this work was Sherrod Avenue church of Christ in Florence and its minister, C. C. Burns. In January 1937 the church began to broadcast from 9:00 to 9:30 each morning six days a week with Burns as the regular speaker. The following year, they added a Sunday morning broadcast from 8:15 to 8:45. Burns had preached in Russell's Valley and Franklin County in meetings and on other occasions, but the radio gave him a daily audience in that area that carried a great influence. His name became a household word among the Christians there and throughout the range of the station and beyond. He was truly a pioneer in radio preaching.

Burns was born at Maud, Alabama, Oct. 6, 1900. Maud is a community in Colbert County a few miles northwest of Russellville. Burns attended high school at Allsboro in the same county and graduated from Freed-Hardeman College in 1926. He also attended Abilene Christian College, Harding College, and Florence State Teachers' College. He taught school in Alabama and was baptized in Detroit, Michigan, by J. W. Shepherd. He became the regular preacher of the Sherrod Avenue church in 1934 and continued there five years. After this, he engaged in full time evangelistic work and continued his daily preaching over WMSD, in Sheffield. A sketch on C. C. Burns in the *Gospel Advocate* said: "More than thirty congregations and many individuals are cooperating with Brother Burns in his radio and evangelistic work. He

has established three new congregations in the immediate Muscle Shoal district. He lives in Florence." (*Gospel Advocate*, Jan. 23, 1941.) In 1945, George DeHoff wrote: "For many years Brother C. C. Burns ... preached daily on the radio from WLAY, Muscle Shoals, Alabama. The Russellville church supported this program \$5.00 per month." (*Russellville Christian*, Mar. 25, 1945.) Checks from the Russellville church were made to C. C. Burns.

Chester Estes, James Wells, Franklin T. Puckett, and several other preachers also carried on successful radio programs from the Muscle Shoals area in the early 1940s. But Burns was the first, and probably the most successful radio evangelist among churches of Christ prior to 1946. The writer's family was personally affected by his radio work. My maternal grandmother listened to him daily and made sure the volume was loud enough for her Baptist neighbor to hear it through an opened window. My father, Clay P. Kimbrough, Sr., was bedfast the last three years of his life and listened to Burns daily. When he died in 1944, Burns and Granville Tyler conducted his funeral in the Russellville meetinghouse.

There is yet another family connection, which also shows the effect of radio preaching in Russell's Valley in the 1940s. Franklin T. Puckett of Florence, Alabama, said: "After having listened to the gospel broadcasts that are conducted over the local radio station, a number of people in the Rockwood community near Russellville, Ala., expressed a desire to obey the gospel and become Christians only. On June 11 C. C. Burns and I went to the home of Luther Malone in that community. About thirty people had gathered to 'hear all things that are commanded thee of God.' After I had given a general outline of God's scheme of redemption, five responded to the gospel invitation and asked to be baptized for the remission of their sins. We went immediately to a beautiful little stream just below the house and I baptized them in Christ's name for the remission of sins. Two had been Adventists, one a Baptist, and the others had never been members of any church. A few members were located in the community, and they all have promised to meet in the home of Brother Malone next Lord's day to worship God in spirit and in truth. C. C. Burns is to meet with and assist them in this first service, teaching them the way of the Lord more perfectly. I plan to be with them the following Sunday. There are others in this community who are convinced of the truth and will obey soon." (*Gospel Advocate*, June 18, 1942.) Luther Malone was the father of Gussie Malone Todd, an aunt of mine by marriage, who was a faithful Christian until her death in 2004.

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## THE NIGHT THE STARS FELL

Earl Kimbrough

The Winter 2000 issue of the *Alabama Heritage*, a University of Alabama publication, carries a story about “stars” falling over Alabama in 1833. Beginning near midnight November 12 and continuing with increased intensity until daylight, this “most awful and sublime” phenomenon occurred. The meteor storm lit the skies all over eastern United States, but the memory of it lingered with people in Alabama long after being forgotten elsewhere. The fiery display so impressed observers in the state, John C. Hall says, “that it took root in our collective memory where it has remained for more than one hundred and fifty years.” Many Alabamians, well into the twentieth century, reckoned dates from “the year the stars fell.” And its echoes still reverberate in Alabama culture.

Two 1930s events helped preserve the association of the falling stars with Alabama. In 1934, Carl Carmer, an English professor at the University of Alabama, wrote *Stars Fell on Alabama*, a popular book about the state. “The memorable title of Carmer’s book caught the attention of lyricist Mitchell Parish, who mentioned it to his partner, composer Frank Perkins. By September, the famous song of the same title was already being recorded by major jazz and popular artists. Listed by *Billboard Magazine* as one of the outstanding songs of 1934, ‘Stars Fell on Alabama’ has done much to keep Alabama alive as the state on which the stars fell.” (*Alabama Heritage*, Winter 2000.) Prolonging the association were a distinctive 1980s re-recording of the song and a re-issuing of Carmer’s book.

In describing the spectacular event at the time, the *Huntsville Democrat* reported that: “For several hours, thousands, even millions of these meteors, appeared in every direction to be in constant motion—all taking the direction of the earth but ranging rather from the east.” The *Nashville Whig* called it “the grandest spectacle that mortal eyes have ever beheld.” A wagoner near Nashville exclaimed, “Great God, the Moon’s got loose.” Of particular interest here is the religious connotation of this marvel of nature. A paper in the Georgia mountains wrote “that many of the profane were frightened to their knees, that Bibles had been taken down which had been covered in dust for want of removal from the shelves. That cards and dice were actually consigned to the flames, and that chuckluck certainly stopped in Nuckollsville for the space of one day and night.”

But the profane were not alone for “the remarkable scene of natural grandeur” also shook pious souls. The Tennessee Methodist Conference was being held in Pulaski, north of the Alabama line. One of those present said: “Many were terrified, and thought the day of judgment at hand. Some wept and others shouted. Many prayed, and some made wonderful confessions of sins

committed.” And the religious ferment aroused by the “falling stars” did not stop when the meteor storm passed. Historian R. M. Devens said, “long after the shower ceased, the morbid and superstitious still were impressed with the idea that the final day was at least only a week ahead. Impromptu meetings for prayer were held in many places, and many other scenes of religious devotion, or terror, or abandonment of worldly affairs transpired.”

Daniel Sommer wrote about a compliment an old elder in Clark County, Kentucky, paid Benjamin Franklin in 1874. The elder told Sommer that he was with Franklin like Pat Caldwell was with the North Star in 1833 when “the stars fell.” Those around him were frightened and many thought the end of the world had come. But Caldwell remained calm, saying: “Be aisy, boys. I’ve got my eye on the North Star, and if that don’t fall, we are safe.” While many were falling away from the Restoration plea, to that elder the steadiness of Franklin gave assurance that the end was not yet. (Earl West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. 1, 104.)

Barton W. Stone saw the lustrous exhibition over Kentucky and thought it portended dreadful days. In a letter to Stone, Elisha Beller told about the meteors in Ohio and said: “Please give me your views on the above Phenomenon, of the fiery stars.” The millennial fervor that gripped much of the religious world in the 1830s, which Stone embraced, likely contributed to his estimate of the event. Replying to Beller, he said: “I have no doubt that awful things are just ahead. May the Lord prepare us to meet them unappalled.” (*Christian Messenger*, Jan. 1834.) Alexander Campbell was in Richmond on his way to New York when the heavenly display unfolded. He said: “On Wednesday morning, as the day dawned, we were conducted by our brother Myers ... to the steam-boat Patrick Henry. As we passed along the streets of Richmond a shower of meteors, called ‘shooting stars,’ seem to irradiate the city. It literally rained meteors for some hours before day, and about six o’clock in the morning the scene was beautiful and sublime beyond description.” (*Millennial Harbinger*, Dec. 1833.) The attitude of these reformers toward this natural wonder reflects their character in relation to the Restoration Movement. While Stone was emotional and sometimes speculative, Campbell was calm and rational. Stone saw the meteors as a warning from God to arrest the eternal interests of the people, but Campbell simply viewed them as a marvel of nature.

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### Rock Creek Philosophy

Nothing is really settled until it is settled right. (*F.B. Srygley-Gospel Advocate*, Feb. 27, 1930.)

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The Final Say

**HOWARD HUGHES**

The late billionaire, Howard Hughes, was a grandson of William B. Gano, gospel preacher, and onetime member of the Pearl and Bryan church in Dallas. Gano's daughter, Allene, married Howard Hughes, Sr., in 1905. Howard, Jr. was born in 1905. Just two generations from preacher to billionaire -- *from faith to failure.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND HIS CRITICS**

"If I were to read, much less answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how, the very best I can, and I mean to keep on doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said about me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, then angels swearing I was right would make no difference" (*Abraham Lincoln*).

\*\*\*\*\*

**LOOKS CAN BE DECEPTIVE**

Leafing through an old issue of the Gospel Guardian, we came across this bit of wisdom:

"A certain Texas church a while back had to choose between two preachers. They finally settled on one because, as one of the deacons explained later, 'He was so much nicer looking than the other.'"

To which Editor Tant responded with, "There are few animals in this world handsomer than a baby skunk."

*Vanguard 1984*

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**Gospel Advocate—1891 style**

"The Christian Evangelist recently requested a number of 'leading men' among 'us as a people' to state what they considered the three greatest needs of 'the current reformation.' I have read the answers with a great deal of interest. In my judgment one of the average-sized needs of 'this reformation' is to quit trying to organize itself into a denomination and stick to the Bible. So far as I can see this is about the only need it has of any consequence unless it be the need of a few active fool killers." . *F. D. Srygley*

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**Bullfighting**

Along about 1938, J.D. Tant began to question the vision of some of the Administrators of some of our "Christian Colleges." He offered some advise to Abilene Christian College in particular, suggesting that maybe they needed a "Bullfighting Team" to create some interest. There is no evidence they took his advice....

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**Revisionist History**

Patrick Henry, who is called the firebrand of the American Revolution, is still remembered for his words, "Give me liberty or give me death." But in current revisionist history the context of these words is deleted. Here is what he said: "*An appeal to arms and the God of hosts is all that is left us. But we shall not fight our battle alone. There is a just God that presides over the destinies of nations. The battle sir, is not of the strong alone. Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it almighty God. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death.*"

**"A SCURRILOUS SLANDER!"**

We still get a chuckle out of a newspaper clipping we saved a few years ago from a California paper. Seems one of the denominational churches in Pasadena was having a horrendous squabble, in which efforts were being made to fire their "glamour-boy" preacher. One of the deacons charged that this man of the cloth was a notorious playboy, and had at least "forty-two" mistresses in his own congregation! To which charge one of his fellow-deacons, an ardent supporter of the pastor, retorted hotly that this was "a scurrilous slander - - - it was utterly impossible that the Pastor have that many lovers, and he personally knew of only three!" ....*Vanguard*

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This completes the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the Journal. It is our hope that you have enjoyed reading it as much as we have enjoyed putting it all together. Future issues will feature such men as Alexander Campbell, John Taylor, Barton Stone, David Lipscomb, Tolbert Fanning and the Randolphs, among others. Also we plan to feature the church in Montgomery, Birmingham and Limestone County.

We are always seeking congregational histories and pictures of church buildings as well as individuals that our readers will find of interest. Please let us know if you have any you would be willing to share. We will have them copied and return the originals to you.

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## 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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## OUR COVER

Once again Earl has painted the cover for this issue. He does a wonderful job and has consented to continue painting the covers for the foreseeable future. He is truly a man of many talents. We are fortunate to have him as a part of this endeavor.....

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## BOOKS ON CD

*Below is a partial listing of some of the great books of The Restoration Movement. Brother Bennie Johns has spent countless hours scanning this material and making it available to the public.*

*We have ordered several of these works and have no reservation about recommending them to you. This is a way to build a tremendous library without the cost. Many of, if not all of these wonderful works, are out of print...  
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