

THE  
KENTUCKY BAPTIST  
HERITAGE



*First Baptist Church, Murray*

A PUBLICATION OF  
THE KENTUCKY BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
THE KENTUCKY BAPTIST HISTORICAL COMMISSION



GEORGE A. JONES  
President  
Kentucky Baptist Historical Society  
July, 1978 - March, 1984

*This issue of The Kentucky Baptist Heritage is dedicated to George A. Jones who faithfully served as president of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society from July, 1978 through the March, 1984 meeting at First Baptist Church, Murray, Kentucky. Due to his anticipated return to North Carolina, his native state, he chose to step aside at this time.*

*During his years of service as Society president he was instrumental in beginning the organization's annual dinner meeting on Tuesday evening of the November sessions of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The Society is an organization of dues paying members. Although the membership and attendance at the meetings failed to fulfill the dream of its leader, Dr. Jones was instrumental in giving the Society direction, creating interest, increasing membership and much needed visibility. Having served for two years as president of the South Carolina Historical Society George brought experience and knowledge of historical work to the Kentucky group.*

Dr. Jones received the Th.M in 1945 and the PH.D. in 1953 from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. During his earlier years in Kentucky he served the Bardstown Junction Baptist Church, Bardstown Junction and the Victory Baptist Church, Shepherdsville as pastor while a student at Southern Seminary. From 1948-50 he served the Kentucky Baptist Sunday School Department as associate and from that work he accepted the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. In 1955 Dr. Jones made another move to serve The Baptist Church of Beaufort, South Carolina as pastor until 1970.

It was 1970 when George Jones returned to Kentucky as Executive Director-Treasurer of the Northern Kentucky Baptist Association where he presently serves. Jones has served Kentucky Baptists in organizations other than those already mentioned. He was three times a member of the State Executive Board 1952-55; 1971-73; and 1977-80. For two years he served on the Convention's Public Affairs Committee; and was two years moderator of the Anderson-Mercer County Baptist Association. The Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission was strengthened by his elected membership.

Dr. Jones has had teaching experience as follows: University of South Carolina, Beaufort Branch where he taught Bible for three years. He taught Jeremiah in the School for Pastors, Furman University, South Carolina. He currently teaches Church Administration, Bible, Preaching and History at the Boyce Bible School, Columbus, Ohio Branch. He also teaches New Testament, Preaching, Theology and Missions at the Northern Kentucky Branch of Boyce Bible School. In 1982, George taught at Boyce Bible School, Louisville and during the year 1982-83 he taught New Testament Studies at the Indiana Branch in Indianapolis.

George A. Jones has been active in many organizations and societies as his full resume' indicates. Wherever he has served, George Jones has been an asset as a leader and an officer.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

T A B L E

O F

C O N T E N T S

One Man In A Thousand ..... 1

Churches Observing 100th  
Anniversaries..... 6

A Short History of Jonathan  
Creek Assembly ..... 8

Future Meetings ..... 10

The First Baptist Church of  
Murray, Kentucky 1846-1931 11

Celebration '87 ..... 43

Baptist Resources ..... 45

Membership Application 47

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ONE MAN IN A THOUSAND

Ecclesiastes 7:38

by R. Charles Blair

Director of Missions

West Kentucky Association

There are those who argue that the great events of history are simply the lengthened shadows of great men. While that view may be debated, it can hardly be ignored. The very thorough history of Blood River Association, published in 1940 by Dr. J. E. Skinner, contains a great deal of evidence to support that position.

The other side of the question must be raised: What circumstances produce great leaders?

Blood River Association has a long and noble history. The area in which it functions was originally part of three associations -- West Union, Little River and Western District -- and the "Family Tree" developed by W. H. Rone indicates Little River as the primary antecedent group.\* Eleven churches "sent messengers to the appointed meeting on Friday before the fifth Lord's day in October, 1870, with instructions to form a new association." (Skinner, p. 12) More than half of these churches are still in the association. Some of the people involved (not all the names of messengers were listed) include: J. C. Spann, William Skinner, E. L. and S.R. McLean, J. A. Spencer, and the preacher of the introductory sermon, Jack Padgett.

The original articles of faith said nothing about the nature of either the church or the association, but included three articles on election, and one affirming a general judgment.

The constitution adopted by the Blood River United Baptist Association (the word "United" being dropped in 1884) made it extremely clear that the association had no authority over the churches as stated in Article 6, but the seventh article established a doctrinal test for fellowship, both initially and on an

ongoing basis. Although Article 2 spells out that "The association shall be composed of messengers chosen by the churches," the very next article calls them "delegates," and some subsequent articles imply or assume that it was composed of churches rather than messengers. For instance, Article 8 states, "New churches shall be admitted into this union which shall petition by letter and messenger, and if found orthodox and orderly may be received by the moderator giving the right hand of fellowship to their messengers." While this ambiguity may have had little or no significance in 1870, it will play a significant part in subsequent history.

Skinner points out reasons for the development of a separate association after the War (Between the States): An increase of population, development of farming, hardships of travel, and an increased number of Baptist churches, coupled with the difficulties of housing large numbers of messengers. This was a period of attempted reconstruction, lean years for the area which had been so divided and decimated. The 1871 report of what became a recurring "Committee on Destitution" says: "In view of the destitution within our borders, and owing to the smallness of our numbers, it being at present a day of small things with us, therefore,

"Resolved, That we advise and earnestly recommend the churches composing our body (their term - R.C.B.) to increase the contributions to their pastors, and other ministers within their bounds, so as to enable them to supply the destitution as far as possible. - S. R. McLean, Chairman." (Skinner, p. 19)

This committee appears regularly for several years; their report of 1873 begins, "WHEREAS, the churches failed to respond to the suggestions made in the report of the Committee on Destitution last year;" (Skinner, p. 25).

At that point, the progressive or pro-mission forces had managed to develop two Sunday Schools and the association received \$41.05 from the

\*Attached at end.

19 churches to carry on its work, including the publication of minutes. The 1884 report of the Associational Board of Missions began, "Brethren, we have done but little."

How much of the lack of vigorous growth was caused by the old anti-mission sentiment, and how much was simply due to the depressed economy, may never be fully known. Blood River did stir itself early to aid Clinton College, a Baptist school not on its own boundaries and having a woman president. We know that trustees were elected by 1890, and possibly before.

There are few new issues among Baptists. In 1876, a letter of petition from the Ledbetter Church was rejected "on account of alien immersion" (Skinner, p. 32), while it was resolved (possibly for the first time) that "this association co-operate with the General Association of Kentucky in proclaiming the Word of God in her bounds." (Skinner, p. 34)

Whether those are the bounds of the General Association or of Blood River is not clear; we must assume that they knew just what they meant, and that later conflicts over the role of the association were simply not in view in those weak years. Corresponding messengers were often elected to meet with sister associations, and received from such, though having no voting rights, and later the association would even elect messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, a practice finally stopped by the convention itself.

While records show some individuals paid to do evangelistic work in the bounds of the association earlier, I.E. Wallace was formally appointed "Associational Evangelist" in 1878, "allowed ten cents for each member in the association, and ... allowed to retain his pastoral charge of the church at Benton." At this session, Wallace advised the churches "not to receive alien immersion from any body whatever." (Skinner, Chapter V) This doctrinal concern may have made possible something which would seem controversial,

assessing the churches a set amount per member for associational work.

Some of the papers circulated among the people as prosperity gradually returned included: the Western Recorder, the Dayspring (a Sunday School paper), the Orphan's Home paper from Louisville, and the American Baptist Flag, later published at Fulton and edited by D. B. Ray, a paper favorable to the views of J. R. Graves. Miss Mary Hollingsworth, who published the orphan's home paper, visited often; at the 1880 session, she and Dr. R. L. Thurman of the Foreign Mission Board were present. I. E. Wallace made what Skinner calls (p.41) "a splendid report on Foreign Missions" in 1881, and a Board of Missions was appointed to seek a District Missionary.

At least 25 churches were in fellowship with the association by 1881, and messengers were seated for the first time from New Bethel (Marshall County) and Murray churches. Annual "Ministers' and Deacons' Meetings" were held during the summers, giving an extra occasion for fellowship.

While the District Missionary had not been found in 1883, Elder D. V. Outland was employed to survey unchurched areas, and his work led to two new churches, one with 12 members and one with five, plus 31 additions in a revival, and two other churches reporting new strength. The Board then recommended raising \$300 for missionary and Sunday School work in the association, and this was enthusiastically adopted (though not fully raised). It is clear that this was a period of real progress: The 1884 minutes show 213 additions to the churches during the previous year, and two more new churches in the fellowship. At the 1885 meeting, the report shows 220 additions, and actual receipts of \$88.05 for the missionary work. Among the noted preachers heard in that session were: J.B. Moody, then of Paducah, later of Hall-Moody Institute; T. S. Shelton, grandfather of Hicks and R. G. Shelton,

N. S. Castleberry, J. C. Spann, and J. D. Outland. (Skinner, p. 54)

Also noteworthy was the continuing presence and influence of Dr. J. W. Warder, who so encouraged a plan of cooperation with the General Association that his work became the basis for the earliest version of a "cooperative program" among Kentucky Baptists. Later known as the "Warder Plan," this means of pooling resources to avoid competition was approved by Blood River as early as 1881 (Skinner, p. 44), though not always followed.

Again in 1886 the association assigned to each church a fixed sum, to be used for associational work, and asked that this be paid quarterly. The amounts varied, evidently with the strength of each church, from \$1.25 to \$7.50 per quarter, the largest sum being assigned to the Murray church, for a total of \$415 to be raised and distributed among five causes. While this system of cooperation with the General Association and the Southern Baptist Convention for District Missions, State, Home and Foreign Missions, continued for a few years, the amounts were small: In 1888, the report showed \$146.95. As Skinner notes from personal experience (p.66-67) "the pastors' wives and children supported the ministry, not the churches, and too much zeal for missions on the part of the pastors, or even the mention of ministerial support, brought upon their heads such indignant denunciations as 'Arminians!' 'Preaching for money!' 'Salvation by works!'"

Still, interest was growing. Some 3000 persons assembled for the closing session of the 1886 meeting, with at least three sermons in progress at various places in the area and many not attending any of them, but all 3000 there because of the meeting. The 1889 report shows 247 additions, 176 of them by baptism. Similar progress in winning and developing people is shown over the "gilded decade" by the Sunday School reports: In 1890, six with 336 enrolled; by 1899, 17 schools reporting "a growing interest." At the beginning of

this decade, only 10 of 32 churches were giving to the associational work; by the end of the decade, which continued adoption of the cooperative plan, almost all the churches saw fit to give in this way.

In the 1893 session, the association did some "strategy planning," for the first time appointing some committees a year in advance so that their reports could be carefully developed. The records, says Skinner, show that practically all the gifts to missions came from churches where there were Sunday Schools. The appointment of colporters and the interest in prohibition of beverage alcohol, along with the Whitsitt controversy, occupied much of the time of the messengers.

It is of special interest to this writer that the annual sermon for 1897 was preached by H. H. Wallace, of Benton, Illinois, county seat of my home county. Wallace was the son of I.E. Wallace, mentioned earlier in this paper.

In 1896, the death of Murray pastor J. A. Hogan was noted, and at the 1897 session a new name appears in the record, that of Harvey Boyce Taylor, a fourth-generation Baptist minister. Taylor, born in Ohio County, Kentucky, in the same year in which Blood River Association was formed, had served two churches before coming to Murray. He was educated at Bethel College (Russellville) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received high honors. His first appearance before the association was to give a report on Religious Literature, in which he said of the WESTERN RECORDER, "How any man claiming to be a Baptist and living in the State of Kentucky can afford to bring up a family without the regular visits of the WESTERN RECORDER is a mystery to us. Next to the Book, it is indispensable in every wide-posted Baptist home." (Skinner, p. 100)

From this time, no year of Skinner's history fails to give a significant place to the name H. B. Taylor. It is frequently recorded that "the rules were

suspended and "moderator and" clerk re-elected by acclamation, Taylor first serving as clerk, and later as treasurer. The vigor of his work as treasurer, so much a characteristic of this extraordinary man, led to more confidence on the part of the churches, larger mission contributions, and the "Unified Budget" (an outgrowth of the Warder Plan), precursor of the Co-operative Program. Taylor was trusted by many because of his strong doctrinal stance, as evidenced by the 1900 report on Religious Literature. The report, by J. N. Hall, mentioned both the Sunday School Board of the convention and the Baptist Publication Society's series published at Philadelphia. An amendment offered by Taylor, and adopted, expressed "preference for the Sunday School series of the Southern Baptist Convention," but with a strong protest against some unsound comments in a recent lesson book. (Skinner, p. 112-113)

The earlier ambiguities as to the nature and authority of both the church and the association are brought into clearer focus in the interaction of H. Boyce Taylor and the churches of Blood River Association for some three decades. He was largely responsible for strong support of "Board Missions" and the development of a cooperative program; he was also responsible for the development of what was known as "Gospel Missions" through the Amazon Valley Baptist Faith Mission project. He was involved strongly in Clinton College, where he gave the 1903 commencement; he received an honorary doctorate from Hall-Moody Institute of Martin, Tennessee; for years, he worked with the Louisville Seminary; and he was head of a 3-year school which boasted, "No textbook but the Bible in any course except music."

Taylor was chairman of the committee which recommended the Unified Budget to the General Association in its meeting at Jellico, Tennessee, in 1915; he was pastor of the church which sent more direct missionaries (largely to South America) than any other one congregation in recent history, possibly in all

history. He could commend Southern Baptist material and at the same time publish his own paper, often disagreeing with specific convention actions. He was, in short, a man of such depth, breadth, and complexity that he really defies analysis. It is hardly too much to say that half-a-century of Baptist life in this area cannot be told without noting H. Boyce Taylor's influence.

Other great men were there, of course: Other effective ministers on any side of the discussion; great laymen who supported -- and others who opposed -- Taylor's views; great ladies, as well, who gallantly worked alongside men who, from our perspective seemed not to encourage them. And there were lesser men, as well, who misunderstood Taylor's genius, and either opposed or blindly followed his lead. Like many great men, he may have been harmed more by his disciples than by his own actions.

But let us try to see the human side of a leader. As Dr. Franklin Owen has so effectively taught us by example, one may understand truth more easily by the analogy of anecdote. If the stories that follow, documented largely by personal conversations with those who knew Dr. Taylor, make me as being in my "anecdotalage," so be it. But if Herodotus is truly "the father of history," then anecdotes are history, and possibly the most effective kind.

Taylor was a tremendously busy man, without today's labor-saving devices. Someone asked him, "Being so busy, do you find much time to pray?" And he is said to have replied, "I am too busy not to pray two hours every morning; else I could accomplish nothing."

A firm believer in divine sovereignty, he led in personal evangelism and the sending of missionaries "for the elect's sake." Yet his strong point was the pulpit ministry, and each message -- especially the Sunday morning sermon -- was polished skillfully. One might expect dogmatism from what was then the only Baptist pulpit in a growing county seat, and increasingly the



most influential pulpit in the area, especially in a dogmatic period, when every group debated. Yet it is told that, after one extremely strong and controversial message, Taylor was stopped by a deacon on the court square on Monday with one simple question: "Did you really pray about yesterday's message?" The story goes, Taylor bowed his head a moment, said, "No," and on the following Sunday publicly reversed himself.

Someone has called consistency "the hobgoblin of small minds." Taylor agreed with his contemporaries that women had no public role in church life, and little in the world in general; yet his daughter taught Greek in West Kentucky Bible Institute, and when he was challenged on this, his response was: "She is under my authority." He also pointed out that the school, which met in a part of his home, was not a church. He taught that women were to wear hats in public worship, and of course not to bob their hair. Yet, with such restrictions, girls and ladies were duly enrolled in the regular classes of West Kentucky Bible Institute at a time when the Louisville campus had a separate program for women mission volunteers, with similar restrictions on appearance.

Conversation with Baptist women who grew up under the Taylor influence has convinced me that they were far from feeling stifled; some of the strongest, freest feminine spirits I have known were raised on these principles.

The issue of women's ordination is far from new. In the early '20's, Taylor published a news note critical of a good friend (he could be quite impartial), the pastor at Martin, Tennessee, saying that the church had voted on whether to ordain a woman to the ministry. In the next issue of News and Truths, he published the pastor's response, beginning with the classic line, "Dear Boyce: We be brethren. Let us not quarrel, at least not until we know all the facts." It seems that a lady with "Pentecostal tendencies" had talked a man into moving her ordination,

and when it was resoundingly voted down, she left for more congenial surroundings.

Other controversies raged in these decades: Church union, the Klan, the lodge. While Blood River (and Taylor) strongly opposed "unionism," J. N. Hall was requested by the association's Committee on Religious Exercises to preach to the overflow crowd of 1902 at the Olive Methodist Church, presumably with the permission of the Methodists. Taylor's position against all secret societies led to rare distinction. While the Ku Klux Klan was strong among Baptists in other areas after World War I, Dr. Taylor stood before his church to announce: "If I find that any of our men are in the Klan, I will personally recommend withdrawal of church fellowship" -- a serious matter in that day. Other pastors followed suit, and the Klan of the '20's never gained strength in areas of Taylor's influence.

Yet this man of strong convictions could be extremely gentle. Dentis McDaniel, still an active deacon at Clinton, Kentucky, tells of hearing Taylor, and his boyhood memory of the great man is instructive. After a strange sermon, someone asked Taylor a question about one of his statements. McDaniel says, "He smiled graciously, opened his Bible and pointed out a passage, saying, 'If you can figure out what else it might mean, you are welcome to do so; I cannot.'" McDaniel has told me that in the pulpit, Taylor did not rant and rave, but taught quietly

--though, it seemed to a boy, at great length.

It seems clear that some things changed in Taylor's life in the 1920's. Whether it was being passed over by the Seminary, or a health problem, or the pressures of so intense a schedule, or the changes in society, or some combination of all these, may never be fully known. His great missionary brother, W. C., told some of us in 1958, "Boyce was not fully responsible in his old age."

While researching my master's thesis,

I read Taylor's News and Truths from World War I to the end, in the library and lounge of Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College. Several students were frequently present, and I read excerpts to them. Those from the earlier period received almost unanimous acclaim; one student even said "That's cool!" But selections from about 1929 on were usually rejected -- such as "little peanut preachers," a frequent tag for his opponents.

This was not merely because of strong stands; his going to jail during the flu epidemic of 1918 was praised by those students. The court had ordered all public assemblies closed, but somehow the movie theatre was allowed to open on a Saturday. (Taylor's influence kept it from ever being open on Sunday.) He at once announced services for his church the following day. The sheriff, a member, stood as Taylor approached the pulpit and said, "I'm sorry, Dr. Taylor, but I must arrest you." "AFTER the sermon, sir; first I must preach!" And he did, after which he voluntarily went to jail and would not pay his own fine. He remained there until someone, anonymously, paid it for him.

Full details of the sad, yet noble close of this ministry, the establishment of a rival church which for some time was not accepted into the association, the division at Benton, and the preceding years when the association became almost a governing body for many of the churches under his near domination, operating its own mission program, are beyond the scope of this paper. The school dwindled, but he gave it his all after the separation from his beloved pulpit. When he finally checked into the Memphis hospital in mid-1932, the doctors said: "You should have come months ago." And he replied, "I could not; I had two young preacher boys who had to complete their work to graduate."

With such commitment, it is small wonder that fifty years later, many of the facts about Blood River Association and this area, for better or for worse, are simply the lengthened, sometimes distorted, shadow of one man -- Dr. Harvey Boyce Taylor.

CHURCHES OBSERVING  
100th Anniversaries

Churches listed below were organized in 1884. We salute these churches and their members in their faithfulness to the Lord's work. May they continue to reach out in their own communities and into the "uttermost parts" as they grow in their witnessing and Cooperative Program giving, uniting their efforts with other Kentucky Baptists.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Association</u>
Bee Spring	Special Grouping
Bethlehem	Blood River
Big Spring	Salem
Dupez	Green Valley
Eubank	Pulaski County
Evergreen	Franklin
Horse Creek	Lynn Camp
Ivyton	Enterprise
Lawrence Chapel	Warren
Manchester	Booneville
Mount Tabor	Tates Creek
New Harmony	Gasper River
New Testament	Bell
Pleasant View	Russell County
Pryorsburg	Graves County
Ryan's Creek	South Union
Salem	Salem
Sorgho	Daviess-McLean
Springfield, 1st	Central
Spring Creek	Blood River
Stone Coal	Irvine
Sulphur	Henry County
Vine Hill	Nelson
Whites Lick	Tates Creek
Wickliffe, First	West Union
Willard	Greenup
Wingo	Graves County

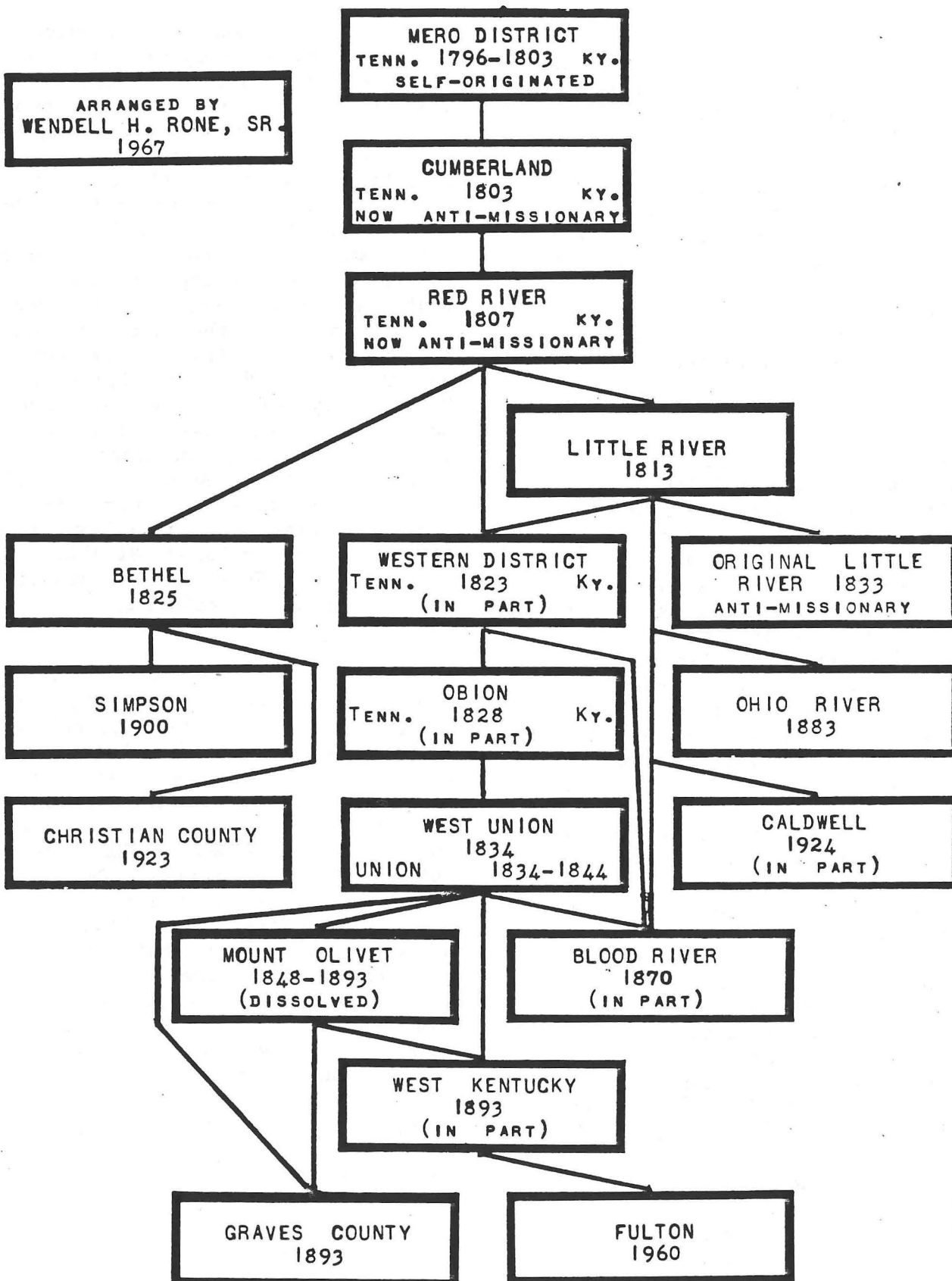
Officers of the Historical Society and of the Commission are interested in knowing how these churches are observing their anniversaries.

(Other churches may have been organized in 1884 but these shown above remain affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.)

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You see things and you say "Why?"; but I dream things that never were and I say "Why not?"

--Henry David Thoreau

# THE "FAMILY TREES" OF THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS OF KENTUCKY



A SHORT HISTORY OF  
JONATHAN CREEK BAPTIST ASSEMBLY  
 by George T. Gray, Manager  
 Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly

God always has a way to accomplish His will if only His people will follow His leadership. Such was the case for Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly.

After having held summer camps at Kuttawa Springs for several years and finding this arrangement unsuitable, West Kentucky Baptists moved their camps to the Bethel College campus at Hopkinsville, but the campus lacked the setting for a real camp program. Burdened for a ministry of this kind, several people met together in the summer of 1954 to seek out a location for a permanent camp site. As they met, Harry Harp of West Kentucky Association, Orman Stegall of Graves County Association, Duncan Smith, A.M. Johnson, Mrs. Paul Stewart and John Flynn of West Union Association, began a tour of some possible sites on the Kentucky Lake. A seventy-five (75) acre tract on Jonathan Creek seemed to be the best choice and this was presented to the four associations that comprised the Southwestern region -- Blood River, Graves County, West Kentucky and West Union -- at their annual meetings to consider purchase of this property.

A camp committee was appointed as follows: Blood River - T. G. Shelton, Harry Hampshire; Graves - Allen Rhoer, James Currin; West Kentucky - Harry Harp, Keith Dunn; West Union - A. M. Johnson, Rudy Bouland, Frank Norfleet, Harry Meadors and John R. Flynn. In December of 1954 the camp committee met at Western Baptist Hospital and received the report that the seventy-five acres could be purchased for \$9,000, with \$1,000 to be paid in cash and the remaining \$8,000 secured by a note payable at \$1,000 per year, plus 6% interest. A second small tract of twenty (20) acres could be purchased, the committee was advised, for \$800, one-half in cash, and \$200 per year for two years, plus interest. A deed to a

sixty (60) foot right-of-way one mile from Highway 68 had been secured at no cost giving direct passage to the property from a state maintained road.

The camp committee discussed the purchase and development of the site and the participation of the four (4) associations in this project. February, 1955, was set as Camp Month for a drive to try to raise a goal of \$30,000 to pay the full purchase price with the remainder to be used for development. A goal of \$1.00 per church member within the associations was reported to a meeting on January 18, 1955, as they discussed the goal of \$30,000 set at the earlier meeting. At the next meeting of the committee on March 7, 1955, at First Baptist Church, Mayfield, it was learned that no offering was taken in Blood River or West Kentucky Associations. One church in Graves Association, Liberty Baptist, Mayfield, contributed \$80 while thirteen (13) churches in West Union had contributed \$1,332. Other churches in West Union Association were to take an offering at a later date.

As West Union was the only association prepared to take action, or lose the site, the required \$1,000 down payment was made by that association and the remainder secured by a note executed later in March, 1955. Some months later the second tract of twenty (20) acres was purchased as required with \$400 cash and \$400 secured by note. It was in the summer of this year, 1955, that the W.M.U. of the Southwestern Region held a two-week camp which was attended by fifty-six (56) boys and girls. Almost the same number of Y.W.A.'s attended a weekend retreat during this endeavor even though there were no buildings. A make-shift kitchen and tents saw the group through that first summer. In the summer of 1956 almost five hundred (500) attended three (3) weeks of camp.

In October, 1955, at the annual meeting of the West Union Association, a report of \$2,941.20 was given as the

result of the camp fund drive, of which \$417.18 came from outside that association. On February 14, 1956, the Executive Board of West Union Association authorized the Trustees of the camp to borrow \$20,000 for payment of the indebtedness and to erect a dining room and kitchen. To meet the obligation, twenty-four (24) churches put the Camp in their budget.

In 1956 the Southwestern Region was enlarged to seven (7) associations as Caldwell, Little River and Ohio River Associations were added to the other four. These three new associations were asked to elect two members to form an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees. This was done, either in their annual meeting or by the Executive Board of the associations. The advisory committee of the three associations began meeting with the Trustees at the camp November 20, 1956, at which time J. R. Waller was chairman of the Board and John R. Flynn served as clerk.

It was at this time that the financial plan of West Union Association to request the churches to include the Camp in their budget was adopted. At this time, also, a committee was formed to work on the plan for the formation of a non-profit organization. Upon formation of the non-profit corporation, the Camp would be jointly owned and equally represented by each of the seven associations.

In the ensuing years, the camp gradually developed as the dormitory, which sleeps one hundred and twenty (120) was constructed. The kitchen/dining room building, constructed earlier, had housed some campers in the basement. The outdoor tabernacle was added and later, still, a swimming pool and a home for the director was built. Four (4) additional associations of Baptists joined the existing seven associations in the ownership and management of the Assembly: Fulton, Christian County, Little Bethel and Ohio Valley.

Mrs. Paul Stewart of the West

Union Association gave of herself tirelessly to service in the camps, as did Mrs. G. U. Cavanaugh and other ladies of the W.M.U. Harold Lassiter was called in 1966 as the first full-time director of the Assembly, which had been incorporated under the name of Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly as a non-profit organization on January 22, 1959. Mr. Lassiter led the camp through the period of pumping water from the lake for camp use to a change-over of service by Jonathan Creek Water District. He led the camp through a growing period with some difficult times, being the only full-time employee, and saw the swimming pool added and the director's home built.

In 1972 George Gray assumed the responsibilities of director of the Assembly and is currently serving in that capacity. During the years between 1972 and 1983, the Assembly added an assistant to the director, a full-time secretary and maintenance man, in addition to becoming a year-round facility with three part-time cooks on call. In 1976 a conference center was completed, adding to the number of existing buildings.

Rev. Earl Shoemake, who was Director of Missions for West Union Association at that time and his family gave \$50,000 toward the erection of this conference building and challenged the churches of the eleven associations to match the donation. Additional structures added during this time were a maintenance building, thirteen cabins to house ninety-three (93) people, a mobile home for the assistant director, and a new swimming pool with bathhouse adjoining. A dock was constructed on the lake and remodeling of the dormitory and dining hall/kitchen facilities was completed.

In its regular quarterly meeting at Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly, April 27, 1982, the Board of Trustees was requested by West Union Association to explore the possibility, with the Kentucky Baptist Convention, of making

the Assembly a better year-round facility. A committee was formed and negotiations were begun immediately.

Dr. Franklin Owen, who was Executive Secretary--Treasurer at that time, attended the July, 1982 quarterly meeting and presented some ways that the Kentucky Baptist Convention could assist Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly; and, he explained some of the possibilities of both usage and development of the Assembly. Committee meetings, correspondence and cooperation between the Convention and the Board of the Assembly permitted plans to proceed very rapidly. A merger with the Convention seemed logical and agreements were entered into by both parties that assured an expanded ministry of the Assembly.

At the January, 1983 quarterly meeting, the Board of Trustees of the Assembly voted unanimously to accept the agreement as set forth by the Kentucky Baptist Convention to expand the ministry through construction of certain additional facilities and through its usage.

On September 1, 1983, Jonathan Creek officially became the property of the Kentucky Baptist Convention as the Convention met the requirements set forth by the eleven (11) associations for the merger. One of the major points of the agreement was that construction of a new conference building would begin immediately following the deeding of the property to the Convention. The Kentucky Baptist Convention was also to assume all debts of the Assembly and operate it under the same philosophy as that under which Cedarmore Baptist Assembly was currently operating. A further agreement was that additional facilities were to be built as resources become available.

The requirements have been met and a conference building, which will seat two hundred and forty (240) people is, to date, March 16, 1984, well underway; and an adult-youth motel type facility, consisting of two

stories and forty-eight (48) rooms, has been started. In addition to these two new structures, extensive remodeling of the dining room and kitchen and installation of all new equipment in the kitchen area is nearing completion. A much needed ministry has been added to the total ministries of the Kentucky Baptist Convention in the acquisition of Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly.

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#### FUTURE MEETINGS

November 13, 1984 -----

*The Kentucky Baptist Historical Society dinner meeting will be at Treyton Oaks, Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville. Reservations are necessary.*

April 12, 1985 -----

*The Historical Society and the Historical Commission will be meeting in Elkhorn Association with the Great Crossing Baptist Church. A very interesting tour is planned. The Association will be observing its bicentennial in 1985.*

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#### QUOTATIONS

*There is a healthful hardiness about real dignity that never dreads contact and communion with others however humble.*

--Washington Irving

*I keep six honest serving-men.*

*(They taught me all I knew);*

*Their names are What and Why and When  
And How and Where and Who*

---Rudyard Kipling

*The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.*

--Franklin Delano Roosevelt

*We can only change the world by changing men.*

--Charles Wells

*The world is not growing worse and it is not growing better--it is just turning around as usual.*

--Finley Peter Dunne

## THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MURRAY, 1846-1931

by Dr. Bill D. Whittaker

Introduction

The First Baptist Church of Murray is one of Kentucky's strongest congregations. Her beginnings and early years of work bear similarities to many other churches but the church has been singularly blessed with some special opportunities. Although not the first church to be organized in the area, the Murray church soon exercised major leadership in Baptist life, especially Western Kentucky and Tennessee. With the establishment of Murray State College this influence spread through the many students who became involved in the life of the congregation.

The following historical sketch was first published in three booklets and distributed at Founders Day worship experiences at Murray in 1976, 1978, and 1979. The information served as a source of thanksgiving for a great heritage and challenged the present generation to Christian commitment in order to ensure an even stronger church for the future.

1846 - 1870

The present land area of the state of Kentucky took its form with the 1819 acquisition of the Jackson Purchase, the large area of land between the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers. The federal land office responsible for the sale of this new land was located at Wadesboro, Calloway County. The influx of people brought a rapid development of the surrounding area. The faster growth of the northern half of the county resulted in the separation of Marshall County in 1842. A new county seat, Murray, was created for Calloway County. In 1844 the courthouse at Murray was erected and the town started to grow.

The population of Kentucky between 1810-1840 grew from 406,511 to 779,898. Wherever people live Baptists have preached the Gospel. It is significant that the number of Baptists in Kentucky from 1810-1840 increased 5.58 per cent annually, nearly twice the population growth. Baptists led the missionary outreach in Western Kentucky. The first minister in the county was a Baptist and Baptists organized the first church. By 1831 three Baptist churches were functioning in the southern half of the county. It was unlikely that the new town of Murray would go long without a Baptist church; however, the beginnings of a church were not directly related to the growth of the town but for the need of harmonious fellowship.

Baptists have frequently been chided about their growth coming from divisions in the churches. Historically this is the case with the First Baptist Church of Murray. Fortunately the misunderstandings which arise in churches often prove to be the beginning of a greater ministry. In August, 1845, a division surfaced within the Sinking Spring Baptist Church. During the following months the members were involved in public accusation, lawsuits, and a drastic deterioration of fellowship. A committee appointed by the West Union Association of Baptists met with the dissident parties in March, 1846.



Each side presented its case and the committee reported:

The parties have all done wrong, and they owe to each other an acknowledgement....And that neither party shall not talk of the subject any more forever, so as to wound the feelings of each other.

The exact nature of the difficulty is not known. Evidently the decision of the associational committee was not acceptable to the majority faction for the Sinking Spring Church promptly withdrew from the West Union Association.

On April 18, 1846, a request was issued to "the ministering brethren" to visit a small group of individuals "in and near the town of Murray desirous of enjoying the privileges of a church." A particular request was made for Locust Grove, Blood River, and Wadesboro churches to send help to constitute a church. Six elders (ministers) and one deacon formed a presbytery on Saturday, April 23. They examined the faith and standing of the petitioning Christians and having "found them orthodox and in good standing" constituted the eleven Baptists as the "United Baptist Church of Christ at Murray" (named changed in 1866). Among the eleven were H. W. Harding, his wife, Elizabeth, Gilbert Harding and his wife, Ada. These four were some of the individuals excluded from the Sinking Spring Church. The other seven members were W. H. Covington and his wife, Mildred, Beverly P. Elliott, Tabitha Pitt, Frances Rowland, Sarah Curd, and W. P. Guthrie.

The following month the group organized by electing as pastor, James P. Edwards, and decided to meet monthly on the fourth Lord's Day and the preceding Saturday. During the summer of 1846, the church adopted Articles of Faith, Rules of Decorum, and a Church Covenant. The first building, a frame structure, was erected at a cost of \$440. In the 1850's a bell was installed and was frequently used to announce the time for services. Since the church met monthly, the support for a pastor was naturally small. In 1854 a report showed the pastor had received "for the last ministerial year \$33 besides a broadcloth

coat." At each business meeting an early item on the agenda stated "the peace of the church called for — all in peace." Occasionally a member would report a breach in the fellowship which would be resolved before the church proceeded to other business.

The organization of the Murray church closely parallels the development of Baptist work in Kentucky and the nation. The Great Revival of 1800-1803 left a tremendous impact on the western frontier. Many conversions were witnessed by the traveling evangelists and a religious awakening came to the whole area. Churches were organized and itinerant pastors traveled a circuit of several churches. One notable achievement of the 1800 revival was the unity of Regular and Separate Baptists under the common banner of United Baptists. In 1815-1816 Luther Rice visited the Commonwealth and the missionary enthusiasm resulted in the organization of six missionary societies. With a common interest in evangelism and missions the churches cooperated through district associations to win the frontier to Christ. This difficult task was complicated by the controversy which plagued the churches during these formative years. A powerful Baptist orator, Alexander Campbell, heavily influenced the churches during 1820-1830. Many of the churches split over his "Reform Movement," which he presented as an attempt to move closer to the teachings of the New Testament. Campbell later gave up his Baptist allegiance and formed the Church of Christ. The churches also disputed over mission methods. By the late 1830's a sense of purpose appeared to dawn and in 1837 the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky was formed. The Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1845.

From her beginning the Murray Church linked herself with the cooperative work of fellow Baptists. In July, 1846, the church decided to cooperate with the West Union Association. In 1856 the church voted to pay \$5 for the support of missionaries "to preach to the destitute in the bounds of West Union Association." The church had speakers from Bethel College, an early Baptist edu-

cational institution at Russellville. In 1868 a representative from the Southern Baptist Convention spoke to the church on the work of "Sabbath Schools."

In October, 1847, the Murray congregation and four other Baptist churches of the surrounding area agreed to gather each fifth Lord's Day "in the work of faith and labor of love." This "union meeting" continued regularly during the next three decades. These gatherings provided a time of mutual encouragement and fellowship. The report of a union meeting in 1854 revealed "the churches generally complain of coldness and barrenness in their spiritual concerns."

The outward unity of Baptists in Kentucky and through the Southern Baptist Convention brought a sense of identity and pride. To strengthen the young churches much stress was placed on Baptist distinctives. Religious debates were common and doctrinal preaching a necessity. In 1860 a debate on infant baptism occurred at Murray between the Methodists and Baptists. One evangelist devoted a service of the revival to preach on the unorthodoxy of the "Campbellites." In 1868 a major debate was scheduled with a Campbellite pastor.

An interesting balance to this stress on doctrinal purity is reflected in the church decision directing the custodian to open the meeting house to "other denominations of Christians wishing to occupy the same for the worship of God." At two regular services of the Murray Church during the 1850's, the sermon was delivered by a Presbyterian preacher. On March 25, 1871, the church refused to allow a Cumberland Presbyterian preacher, Dr. C. J. Collingsworth to utilize the building for a series of lectures against the Campbellites. The resolution noted the minister had conducted himself in an unChristian way during a debate the previous year. The church did affirm at the same time their willingness to let other Christians use their facilities "in the spirit of Christianity."

In April, 1859, Pastor J. L. Morton requested the church to hold services

"for the benefit of coloured people." At the first service of this new work, two slaves related their experience with Christ and were received for baptism. A deacon was appointed to ask the master's permission. Rule number fifteen in the original Rules of Decorum stated "no Negro slave shall be received into the church without the approbation of his or her master or mistress." This requirement was finally eliminated in January, 1898. After the Civil War other Blacks were baptized into the fellowship. Church minutes in the post-war years reflect a noticeable change in that last names were given to the "former slaves." The unity of all persons in Christ was visibly demonstrated as Black and White went together for the baptism at "the ford on Clark's River on the road from Murray to Paris." Black Baptists organized their own state convention in 1865. The development of Black churches may have contributed to a shift in attitude and involvement with Blacks as reflected in an 1873 decision by the church which prohibited Negroes from further use of the building.

The Civil War severely affected the young congregation. The church was involved in a protracted meeting the first week in January, 1861. The minutes record an appropriate response by the church toward the approaching crisis.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights preaching by Elder Green at candle lighting.

Friday morning, January 4, 1861, fasting by members of the church at 10 o'clock A.M.

Elder E. L. McLean of Jonathans Creek Church read the 58th chapter of Isaiah and delivered a lecture from the same, suitable to the occasion of public or National thanksgiving: and prayer meeting was held by the church, conducted by Elder McLean in answer to the request of the President of the United States to implore the God of Heavens to stay the danger that now threatens our nation and restore peace and concord throughout our now distracted and threatened National Confederacy.

In April, 1861, the Saturday meeting of the church was not held because of confusion in making up a company of volunteers for the Confederate Army. In November, 1862, the church decided to postpone indefinitely the selection of a regular pastor. Most services were conducted during the Civil War years by supply

preachers or lay members. Union troops harassed the area and once burned much of the town. Although hampered by the events of the time the church fellowship must have been a stabilizing influence in the lives of the people.

The close of the Civil War brought some stability and Elder T. H. Petit was called as pastor in July, 1865, and served until November, 1870. In his final year the church decided to "pay our pastor as much as \$100 for his services this year and more if it can be raised by subscription." When Brother Petit resigned, a lengthy and loving resolution was approved and published in the Western Recorder, the state paper of Kentucky Baptists.

About sixty-six members belonged to First Baptist Church in 1870. The westward expansion of the country had kept the population of Murray on a low level; only 170 people were counted in the 1870 census. The next few years would see that figure quadruple. The coming of the railroad in 1879 brought the city into closer contact with others. The church steadily grew during the next decade and in 1899 called her first full-time pastor.

The church in these early years bore the traits which would distinguish her during the next century. Concern for doctrinal stability, commitment to missions at home and around the world, and cooperative work with other churches were the foundational principles of our forebears. The Lord continues to bless our efforts as we build on these principles.

1870 - 1896

The close of the American Civil War brought some stability to the country and the small Murray congregation. T. H. Petit served as pastor from July, 1865 to November, 1870. When he resigned a lengthy and loving resolution was approved and published in the Western Recorder, state paper of Kentucky Baptists. This close relationship would be renewed during the following years when Brother Petit returned to fill the pulpit in 1875 and 1886, the only man in Murray's history to be called as pastor three times.

About sixty-six members belonged to First Baptist Church in 1870. The westward expansion of the country had kept the population of Murray on a low level. Only 170 people were counted in the 1870 census. The next few years would see that figure quadruple. The coming of the railroad in 1879 brought the city into closer contact with others.

During the twenty-five year period of 1870-1896 the pastorate of Murray Church changed twelve times; five years was the longest tenure. This turnover in pastoral leadership resulted in the church ministry continuing primarily on a maintenance level. Economic conditions affected the work including nationwide financial panics in 1873 and 1893. A severe drought in 1874 caused major crop losses and half of the wheat crop was lost by the rains of 1875. Kentucky Baptist growth was slow during the 1870's, increasing only 1.90 percent. The westward migration attributed to more members lost by letter than were gained. In spite of these adverse factors, the Murray congregation took some significant steps to strengthen their outreach to the community and the world.

From August to November, 1871, the Murray pastor was William Skinner, a pioneer preacher born in 1800 and ordained in 1839. Brother Skinner also pastored the Jonathan Creek Church (now Elm Grove) which he organized in 1846. Elder Skinner preached the introductory sermon at the October 20, 1871 session

of Blood River Baptist Association. His grandson, J. E. Skinner, served as pastor of Murray in 1931-36 and his great-granddaughters, Onnie and Marie Skinner, remain active members of our church. William Skinner died October 19, 1872.

In February, 1879, Asa Cox became pastor. Evidently his first year went well for in December it was decided to elect the "pastor of this church indefinitely as to time." Early in Brother Cox's ministry the members approved a collection for mission work within the West Union Association.

In June, 1879, the Sinking Spring Baptist Church had a mission emphasis featuring T. P. Crawford (1821-1902), Southern Baptist missionary to China. Services at Murray were held early and members were encouraged to go hear the veteran missionary. Crawford, converted at Sinking Spring in 1837, went to China in 1852. While in China he began to adopt a philosophy of work markedly different from the Foreign Mission Board. While on furlough in 1878-79 and again in 1885, Crawford strongly advocated his approach of mission methods in Kentucky and other southern states. The breach between him and the Foreign Mission Board continued to widen until he resigned as a Board-sponsored missionary in 1894. "Gospel Missionism," as his movement became called, continued strong until the 1920's. For many years associations in West Kentucky were challenged to support the work of the Foreign Mission Board and the gospel mission plan. An interesting historical development influenced by gospel missionism was the Baptist faith mission work in the Amazon Valley which Boyce Taylor helped organize in the early 1900's.

A regular event in the church was the fall revival. In November, 1879, one of the most productive meetings occurred. During the first week the church met daily for services at 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 7:30 p.m. The following two weeks continued with morning and evening services. Thirty public professions were registered with twenty-three received into the church fellowship.

The revival seemed to bring the church into a new period of boldness and at business meetings in the winter of 1879-80; the congregation decided to consider improving their facilities and added a second weekend each month of preaching services.

Other area Baptist churches probably caught some of the revival spirit when the Murray Church hosted the Union Meeting of November 29-30, 1879. Messengers from Sinking Spring, Wadesboro, Locust Grove, Jonathan Creek, Oak Grove, East Liberty, and Ledbetter Baptist Churches were present. The major sermon focused on a doctrinal issue and four pastors offered "criticism." On Sunday morning the Murray pastor preached "after which the Communion or Lord's Supper was celebrated. Then they adjourned...."

The condition of the church building took major attention during Brother Cox's pastorate. In November, 1879, a committee was asked "to bring a report on whether or not it will be best for this church to repair the old meeting house or to build a new house." Two months later a committee of six was authorized to propose contracts and solicit donations for the purchase of a lot and erecting a new house of worship. By the spring of 1880, the Building Committee reached the conclusion it would "not be advisable to try to build a meeting house the present year." However, 80,000 bricks were ordered in the hope work could begin in the near future. In December, 1880, the church decided to let the Methodists use the building on the first and fourth weekends of each month during the following year. The agreement stipulated a sharing of expenses such as firewood, oil for lights, and services of the sexton.

The following year March 18, 1881, the Building Committee recommended the facility be repaired and the order for bricks cancelled. Six months later a remodeling plan was approved which called for replacing the six side windows and "have a frame made and bell put up in the west end of the house." Money for the project came from "funds on hand in the Sisters Aid Society." Winter



came before the project was started and the available funds had to be used to purchase a new stove. In August, 1882, the church resumed their earlier effort to build a new structure. After one month of solicitation subscriptions totaled \$320.75. An attempt was made to sell the property currently in use, but a reasonable offer could not be obtained.

Ironically, while the church considered building, the pastor had to plead for his salary to be paid. The method then in practice was to pay him each quarter and the church collections had been low. Pastor Cox resigned in December, 1882. A committee was soon approved to "solicit and pay Brother Cox the deficit due for 1881-82." The balance of \$47.75 was finally paid in 1897. Possibly to avoid a similar embarrassment the church returned to quarter time services.

Pioneer Baptist work in the western part of Kentucky and Tennessee was organized in three associations: West Union, Little River, and Western District. Marshall and Calloway County occupied the central part of this territory. Messengers to the annual associational meeting were usually away from home a week. J. E. Skinner relates:

With the increase of population and a development of the farming industry of the country, the pleasant forest trails were turned into long and narrow lanes where mud or dust made the travellers discomforts and sacrifices increasingly great, and created the necessity for smaller associational territories and shorter journeys to attend the associations.

Thus in 1870 the Blood River Baptist Association formed with messengers from eleven churches participating in the organization. The Murray Church continued to actively support the West Union Association, hosting the Annual Meeting and Sunday School Institute in 1881. Local fellowship came through the Union Meeting and the Ministers and Members Meeting held on a regular basis between the annual meetings. However, at the August, 1882, business conference the church decided to "withdraw from West Union Association and unite with Blood River Association in whose midst our church is located." Messengers from the church

presented a petitionary letter at the Annual Meeting convened October 20, 1882, in the Calvert City Baptist Church. Murray was the twenty-sixth church to cooperate with the Blood River Association. The following year, P. M. Ellison, of the Murray Church was chosen Associational Clerk. In 1884 the Association elected Murray layman, G. W. Craig, to the position. He served through the 1890 session.

A significant factor in Kentucky Baptist growth was the development of Sunday Schools. Early efforts at statewide promotion faltered. In 1876 state worker, F. H. Kerfoot, promoted the motto, "a Baptist church in every community and a well organized Sunday School in every church." The Sunday School convention met at Owensboro in 1880 and the General Association of Kentucky Baptists in the 1882 annual session, meeting at Hopkinsville, encouraged full church support of Sunday School work--"all our people should be taught that it is the duty of every church member to work in this department, either as teacher or pupil; that every school organized should be a church act, to be maintained by the membership."

An organized Bible teaching program was inaugurated in the second month of Judson Taylor's pastorate in Murray which started in November, 1883. The record reads:

After some discussion by the members of the church present, it was moved and carried that this church organize and have carried on in our meeting house on the first Sunday in January, 1884, a Baptist Sunday School, and that an invitation be given to those of other religious faith and particularly the paedo-Baptists of our town and vicinity to join our Sunday School and aid us in this work.

Sister Fannie N. McElrath was elected the first superintendent. In 1885 only nine of the thirty-two associational churches had Sunday Schools.

By January, 1884, the building repair was completed and the committee "discharged when they raise the money and pay off the remaining indebtedness against the church for said repairing." The debt in July, 1885, amounted to

\$28.60. To protect the improved building the church had it insured for \$700.

Developments in 1884 illustrate the communication and cooperation between the different levels of Kentucky Baptist life. The General Association Meeting in May adopted an approach to unify their mission efforts and cut down on the number of appeals made in the churches. No doubt this was shared by J. W. Warder, corresponding secretary of the State Board of Missions, when he attended the Blood River Association in October, 1884. The Association approved the following plan:

That the churches make an honest effort to raise the sum of \$500 to be equally apportioned to District Missions, State Missions, Sunday School and Colportage Work, Home Missions, and Foreign Missions; it being understood that the State Mission Board and State Sunday School Board, appropriate their portion of this fund to mission and Sunday School work in our bounds under the direction of the Board of this Association.

On January 11, 1885 the Murray congregation took action to support the Associational goal and appointed a committee of five to collect money for the five areas of mission concern. Already the way was being prepared for what would later become a more unified approach to mission giving which we now know as the Cooperative Program.

A potpourri of concerns came to the attention of the church in the late 1800's. Church discipline exercised judgement on members charged with drinking alcoholic beverages. Eight members with a record of "long and continued absence" received a letter from the church clerk and additional efforts by the body to gain their participation. A committee undertook a search "to recommend suitable brethren for deacons." A new approach to underwrite expenses was launched in November, 1885, when W. G. Love and G. W. Craig were appointed a committee "to take up a public collection on each Sunday when this church has public service to raise a fund for church expenses." John G. Stewart was ordained to the gospel ministry in December, 1887.

On January 8, 1888, J. S. Edmonds received the church's call to become pastor. His responsibilities included preaching on the second and third Sundays and the preceding Saturdays at a salary of \$250. The relationship did not last long for in August, 1888, Pastor Edmonds was requested to "send to this church as soon as he can do so his resignation." In December the Murray Church tried two approaches to secure a pastor with adequate support. Sinking Spring Baptist Church was asked to cooperate in calling Brother J. L. Perryman as pastor of both churches. A request also went to the Missionary Board of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky for an appropriation of \$200 to aid in securing the services of Brother Perryman.

Brother Perryman assumed his duties in February, 1889, preaching only on the third Sunday. The new pastor immediately led the membership to begin plans for building a parsonage. Cash gifts of \$204.75 and pledges totaling \$136.05 came in during the following year. On February 25, 1890, a committee was appointed to "secure funds and direct building the minister's home for any Bro. Baptist minister who may be serving the Murray Baptist Church." A lot measuring 217 feet by 87 feet was purchased and two floor plans were considered, varying in cost from \$550 to \$575. Brother Perryman did not stay long enough to live in the new home which was not completed until May, 1891, after the church authorized a loan of \$200 to finish construction. A report at the 1890 State Convention stated twenty-two churches furnished homes for their pastor.

The second longest pastorate of the first fifty years of the church's history started in January, 1891, when Brother N. S. Castleberry assumed his duties. Well known and respected in the Blood River Association, Brother Castleberry made his first appearance before the Annual Meeting in 1885. He would preach six more annual sermons to the group and serve twenty-two years as Moderator. A strong missionary-minded preacher, Castleberry was a leader in encouraging churches to cooperate in mission work. His leadership came at a

crucial time, for in 1891 only ten of thirty-two churches in the association contributed to missions. Major concerns of the day find expression in the topics assigned to preachers at a Ministers and Members Meeting of 1890:

Do the scriptures teach that it is the duty of each individual member of the churches to contribute to the support of State, Home and Foreign Missions?

Is it in accordance with the teachings of the word of God to hold weekly Sunday Schools, and if so, what are the benefits to be derived therefrom?

Is it right for a minister to demand a stipulated salary for his work as pastor?

Murray hosted the Associational Meeting in 1894. Representatives attended from the State Board of Missions, Bethel College, Kentucky Ministers Aid Society, Louisville Baptist Orphan's Home. At this meeting a strong cooperative plan of mission support was reinstated after a two year lapse.

Bro. Castleberry accepted the church at a yearly salary of \$300 and parsonage. He came to the church following a year of growth in which twenty-two persons were added to the membership. The Sunday School enrollment in October, 1890, was 105, with an average attendance of 51. Nine teachers and officers directed the Sunday School. Another step was undertaken to provide financial stability when the church elected W. G. Love as treasurer "to receive all funds, pay all just claims, and keep an account and report at the close of each month." On March 14, 1895, the treasurer reported "seventeen cents in the treasury and the church was out of debt as far as he knew." The church repaired windows, had the stovepipes reset, and erected the stable on the parsonage lot. Brother Castleberry declined to accept the call to serve during 1896. He left the church with 132 members, 85 enrolled in Sunday School, with 56 in average attendance.

Three names were placed on a ballot for the church to consider as pastor in the business meeting of December 29, 1895; James A. Hogan was elected. He

lived off the field and the parsonage was rented for \$5.00 a month. During his brief pastorate the church purchased twenty-one hymnals, "Harvest Bells," and W. G. Love and J. H. Churchill were elected deacons. Brother Hogan died in the summer of 1896 and the church was without a pastor until November, 1896, when "the name of H. Boyce Taylor was presented and vote taken resulted in his election." Brother Taylor started his work in January, 1897, ushering in one of the most momentous periods in the life of First Baptist Church, Murray.

1897 - 1931

The death of Bro. J. A. Hogan during the summer of 1896 again started the Murray congregation on the search for a pastor. Messengers from the church attended the Blood River Association meeting and asked Professor A. F. Williams, Bethel College Representative, if he could recommend a suitable candidate. He suggested the church contact H. Boyce Taylor, a June graduate of the Louisville seminary and pastor in Carroll County, Kentucky. The committee wrote Taylor and in the November, 1896 business meeting the church called him as pastor "unseen, unsampled, and unheard at a salary of \$400 per year." Church membership stood at 112, 40 of whom were non-resident. The call was for one year but in October, 1897, it was made indefinite by a vote of 64-1. The salary was then increased to \$500. Taylor came to the church as a single man, but in the following year married Mamie Peay. He was the church's first full-time pastor.

The new pastor soon led the church to remove an embarrassment from earlier days--the unpaid salary of former pastor Asa Cox. In November, 1897 the members pledged the necessary amount of \$47.75 and the account was finally settled. In January, 1898 the Rules of Decorum were revised. Ongoing evangelism and outreach was encouraged by the decision to "receive members after each session." Rule nine was amended to require unanimous agreement to dismiss members by letter. A clause on receiving slaves as members was stricken. The church also eliminated rule seventeen: "If any member shall be absent for more than one meeting he may be called on to show the cause of his absence."

In December, 1898 efforts were started for building a "new house of worship" provided \$4,000 could be raised. By March 28, 1899 this amount had been pledged and an additional \$535 came from the sale of the parsonage. A construction contract was awarded in April and the building was dedicated on January 21,

1900. T. T. Eaton, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, delivered the dedicatory sermon. Eaton also served at the time as editor of the WESTERN RECORDER, Kentucky Baptists' news journal. The new building experienced an old-fashioned revival during February, 1901. George Cates preached for 25 days; 107 were received into the church, 61 by baptism.

During July, 1901 several individuals in the Dexter community requested the church to "extend an arm there, they being desirous of being under the watch-care of Murray church." Following a week of preaching by Pastor Taylor, 26 persons were received. In August, 1902 the Dexter church was organized, with the Murray church deeding some property to the new congregation. A second mission point was established north of town on October 16, 1910. In August, 1911 Bro. Howerton preached a revival and 19 were baptized, including Martha and Liza Spann. This mission was constituted into the Scott's Grove Baptist Church in July, 1912. The mother church presented a roll book to the new body upon its organization.

Church life in the beginning of the century reflected the normal experiences of the day. A bucket and dipper was placed in the church for drinking water. In 1901 the church installed electric lights, provided they could continue getting them for \$2.00 per month. The building was heated with coal and about 300 bushels of coal was needed each winter. Discipline was an important factor and frequently in business meetings individuals were reprimanded for breaking the covenant. The church readily forgave and extended the hand of fellowship to individuals who indicated proper repentance. On one occasion three individuals came expressing their regrets over moral infactions. The church promptly forgave them and at the close of the service the members came around to extend the hand of fellowship while the congregation sang "Blest Be the Tie that Binds."

The church provided an outstanding means of inspiration, church growth,



and missionary education through the annual Bible Institutes. At first called "Soul-Winners Convention" the church gave full support to the program in 1904. The Institute was normally scheduled the early part of February and lasted for a week, with three sessions each day. The program included area preachers, missionaries, state workers, and Southern Baptist Convention personnel. In 1917 Taylor wrote this opinion of the Institutes:

No single phase of our church life and work has contributed more to the spiritual growth and stability of the church than these annual Bible Institutes.

The Institutes were held each year through 1931:

Bro. Taylor was a strong believer in the printed word and the potential of evangelism and church growth through literature. On April 9, 1905 he started the "Pastor's Circulating Library." It was the first library in the city and included classics, popular works, and religious books. The bulk of this library is still intact and on display in the church. January 6, 1906 marked the first issue of NEWS AND TRUTHS, a 16-page weekly paper edited and published by Bro. Taylor. It was funded by subscriptions and private donations. Publication continued until Taylor's death in 1932. Circulation reached approximately 3,000. The NEWS AND TRUTHS office also included a bookstore with a large stock of Bibles and religious material. Taylor also printed several tracts and booklets which were widely distributed.

A strong Bible-teaching program is a vital part of a growing church and the Murray Church Sunday School showed a steady increase in growth. In 1902, 162 were enrolled with an average attendance of 110. W. T. Sledd served as Sunday School Superintendent. With increased involvement the need for additional space became more pressing and in 1909 a two-story annex was erected. For many years the Sunday School had functioned as an auxiliary of the church, electing their own officers and conducting business. On May 26, 1912 the Sunday School "voted to put itself under the control of the church." The church accepted this

proposal and the workers currently serving. Officers and teachers in 1912 were: Assistant Superintendent, Dr. W. H. Graves; Classification Superintendent, W. T. Sledd; Secretaries, Kenneth Methany, J. D. Rowlett; Treasurer, H. B. Gallon; Home Department: Superintendent - Mrs. H. A. Taylor, Visitors - Mrs. J. L. Montice, Cora Boyd; Primary Department: Superintendent - O. V. Pitman, Teachers - Mrs. Mary Graves, Cora Boyd, W. J. Beale, O. V. Pitman; Junior Department: Superintendent - Maggie Housden, Teachers - A. B. Lassiter, Mrs. B. B. Keys, Maggie Housden, Hazzie Saile, Substitute - Fay Housden; Adult Department: Superintendent - Albert Lassiter, Teachers - Albert Lassiter, Mattie Miller, Mrs. H. B. Taylor; Adult Department: Superintendent - J. H. Jones, Teachers - Mrs. Barber McElrath, J. H. Jones, Mrs. W. T. Sledd; Adult Department: Superintendent - A. B. Irvan, Teachers - H. B. Taylor, Mrs. T. Shouse, A. B. Lassiter. The average Sunday School attendance in November, 1912 was 213. In 1923-25 The General Association of Baptists in Kentucky recognized the Murray Church for having a "Standard Sunday School"--an achievement award for excellence in training, facilities, and outreach. The pastor gave books to individuals with perfect attendance in Sunday School.

During the first decade of Taylor's pastorate several distinctive actions were taken in the area of church finance. On May 20, 1900 the church ceased to specify a definite pastor's salary and decided "that after paying sexton's amount that balance in treasury at end of each month be paid to pastor." In later years with a budget divided by percentages the pastor's salary was 25 percent of undesignated offerings. In 1905 the church stopped carrying insurance on buildings and the amount of the yearly premium was given to missions. On February 10, 1907 the members agreed the "church shall not go in debt but pay as we go."

In 1900 the church developed the unified budget plan of giving. On his twentieth anniversary Taylor described the genesis of this new method of church

finance:

For two or three years the church reported a deficit each year. This grew monotonous to all and the deacons and pastor met at W. G. Love's to devise ways and means to remedy that. After a good deal of talk and some prayer and several conferences, at the suggestion of Bro. Love and upon the recommendation of the deacons, the church adopted what is known as the "box plan of giving," i.e., to put up a box at each door and "walk by faith" depending upon God and the volunteer gifts of his people for the support of the church. At the close of that year with the exception of one or possibly two of the deacons and a few other members, the church had made up their minds to do away with the boxes and go back to the subscription plan of church finances. The pastor preached upon the plan. God was with him. The Lord led him at the close to call upon the very deacon to lead in prayer who had come there to make the motion to go back to the old plan. When he got down to pray he said, "Now Lord, you know that I came here to oppose the plan Bro. Taylor has just presented from Thy word. But Lord we do not want to be found fighting against Thee." There was more but those first two sentences settled it and the plan stuck and it has worked gloriously as all God's plans will if tried in faith and dependence upon Him.

Prior to the "box plan" the Murray congregation operated as other churches. Committees would be appointed to seek gifts for missions and subscriptions for the pastor's salary and other needs. Work beyond the local level was supported through special appeals. Most of the schools and mission boards sent field workers to the churches for special offerings. This was not only costly and inefficient, but many worthy mission causes were neglected. In 1905 Bro. Taylor started serving on the Executive Board of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, a position he would hold for the next 20 years. This provided an opportunity to give wider exposure to the stewardship work of the Murray congregation. In May, 1913 Taylor preached the annual sermon before the state meeting. His theme was, "Kingdom Building," based on John 2:25-3:8 and Matthew 6:33. The state body requested a copy of the full message. At that same meeting Bro. Taylor was named chairman of a "committee of five to consider the question of unifying our work so as to make unnecessary the large representation

of various denominational interests at our district associations." The Committee of Five reported the following year and their report was referred to a Committee of Nine, which was to give publicity during the year to their findings and report to the Association. Taylor was also appointed chairman of this Committee of Nine.

In 1914-15 Taylor and F. B. Perkins, a lay member of the committee, toured the state promoting the unification plan and the unified church offering approach. At the November 17, 1915 meeting of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, meeting in Jellico, Tennessee, Taylor presented a nine-point Report on Unification, which was adopted by rising vote. The first provision of their report stated:

That we adopt the budget plan for the collection of funds for the support of all objects under the control and direction of the General Association including Foreign Missions, Home Missions, State Missions, and other denominational interests fostered by Kentucky Baptists.

Boyce Taylor was chosen chairman of the state convention's first budget committee and in 1917 was elected moderator of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky. Kentucky's adoption of the unified budget plan directly influenced the 1925 inauguration of the Cooperative Program, the national channel for mission giving of Southern Baptist churches.

The 1914 budget for Murray Baptist Church showed the following percentages: Missions, 50 percent; Pastor's Salary, 25 percent; Assistant Pastor's Salary, 5 percent; Sunday School, 10 percent; Miscellaneous, 5 percent; Poor, 5 percent.

With an emphasis on missions and evangelism it would be expected that a steady stream of individuals would go from the Murray Church to fields of Christian labor. Seventeen men were ordained to the gospel ministry during the years 1899-1931. The first was Charles L. Neal, ordained December 31, 1899. Bro. Neal later served in Mexico. At the July 2, 1905 business meeting the church passed resolutions concerning two women called into Christian service.

For as much as two of our beloved sisters, Miss Rowena Williams and Louella Housden, have been impressed with the call to mission work,...do most heartily endorse them and joyfully commend them to the work to which they have been set apart by the Holy Spirit....We gladly share in their sowing that with them we may be partakers of a joyful and bountiful harvest through their labors in Christ. May the Spirit guide, the Father give grace, the church her prayers and sympathy.

The resolution contained a recommendation to the WMU Training School of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and the church agreed "to supply any lack of means on their part to give them a preparatory course."

On October 31, 1909 farewell services were held for Miss Housden "before her departure to China as a foreign missionary." M. E. Dodd, pastor at Paducah and later SBC president, preached in the morning service. Miss Housden later married Dr. R. E. Beddoe and they served in China for 38 years. In 1913 the church agreed to pay the home mission salary of Miss Rowena Williams. She worked in New Orleans among the Italians. The church had already been supporting for some years Bro. Louis Lyttle, Home Mission Board worker in the Eastern Kentucky mountains. Charles H. Wilson was approved for ordination on January 17, 1911 and in July was chosen a missionary colporter on a salary of \$50 per month.

Ministry in the local community received an extra dimension by the election on December 24, 1913 of Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor as city missionary-pastor's assistant. Mrs. Taylor's (no relation to the pastor) work centered on visitation and enlisting people in the Sunday School. She especially worked with the children's departments. She collected clothing and other usable items for needy families. Many people remember this tall lady with an outgoing personality who drove her horse and buggy around Murray and worked so diligently with children and families. Mrs. Taylor was the sister of Mrs. J. F. Scholfield. Mr. and Mrs. Scholfield frequently came to Murray and sang in church revivals and institutes.

The church approved on November 15, 1914 a constitution and bylaws for a young people's group. In 1916 the Baptist Young People's Union (BYPU) officers were: President, Hugh M. McElrath; Group I Captain, M. E. Dilday; Group II Captain, H. G. Waddlington; Secretary, Graves Sledd. Bro. Taylor would frequently have the youth in his home, primarily on Friday nights. These fellowships featured singing, talking, and games, such as "upjinks." People of all ages attended these evenings of Christian fellowship.

Outstanding support for missions came from the women of the church. They were first organized in 1897 as the Ladies Aid Society. Mrs. Nanney Graves was the first president. The organization had four circles--North, East, South, and West. These circles met in homes and mothers took their children to the meetings until they reached school age. In subsequent years the group was called the Women's Auxiliary. Officers in 1916 were: General President, Mrs. Eula Sledd; Vice-President, Miss Cappie Beale; Treasurer, Mrs. Truman Beale; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. H. B. Taylor; Recording Secretary, Miss Muriel Karr; Circle Presidents: North, Mrs. Barber McElrath; East, Mrs. Ollie Lucas; West, Mary Graves; South, Flora Love; Central, Fannie N. McElrath. These women's groups regularly supported mission work through special gifts. State Convention records note the Murray women made a 1901 contribution of \$50 for "Boxes for the Frontier." Mountain schools and the regular State, Home, and Foreign Mission efforts received prayer and financial support. Occasionally women from the church attended the State Women's Convention, as Louella Housden did in 1905, Mrs. Barber McElrath and Mrs. W. G. Love in 1907 and the pastor's wife in 1911. The WMU report for 1920 included the following items: "Quilts quilted (15), \$65.00; garments made, 10; number enrolled, 62; new members, 12; visits made, 1,020." Mission offerings went to China hospital, Eastern Kentucky, the poor and the children's Thanksgiving offering.

An interesting section of the church's history came as a result of America's entry into World War I. During 1914-16 war raged in Europe and the possibility of American involvement grew more imminent. Bro. Taylor preached against the uselessness of war and when America finally declared war in April, 1917, he encouraged Baptists not to fight and supported the "conscientious objector," whom he said should not be called upon to slay his own soul in satiating a national thirst for blood. In the December 5, 1917 issue of NEWS AND TRUTHS Taylor spoke against the Red Cross and YMCA. An article in the December 20 Murray Ledger noted "A number of Murray businessmen refused to permit the Red Cross posters to be placed in their store shop windows." Editorials critical of the pastor's stand and reflecting public support for the war appeared in Louisville, Lexington and Paducah papers.

The controversy reached sufficient proportions to prompt Taylor to resign as pastor of the Murray church. He tendered his resignation on May 5, 1918. The church refused to accept the resignation "by the largest vote that had ever been taken on any questions voted on by the church." On the following Wednesday evening a letter from Bro. Taylor was read imploring the church to accept his resignation. The church voted to do so by a vote of 49-29. At the July 10 meeting the call of a pastor was undertaken. Regular rules of order were suspended and an election by acclamation was held. H. B. Taylor was nominated and the motion approved for his indefinite call.

Bro. Taylor was elected moderator of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky at their annual meeting in Paducah, November 12, 1917. Following the December NEWS AND TRUTHS' article and subsequent stories, several congregations called for Taylor's resignation from the state office. Although he refused to resign, in a desire for unity within the denomination, he would not permit his renomination at the December 3, 1918 convention. The experience marked a turning point in Taylor's involvement in Kentucky Baptist life. He

had only missed two conventions in the preceding 18 years; during the following 12 years he only attended twice and only on one occasion was he involved in the state convention program.

The war ended on November 11, 1918 but an influenza epidemic that winter stirred the previous controversy again. The State Board of Health ordered a ban on all public gatherings until the epidemic abated. Taylor publicly declared the state had no authority to close churches and said he would hold services as usual. On Wednesday, December 19, 1918 Taylor and a few members gathered for prayer meeting. The sheriff sat near the front and after the service arrested the pastor. On the following Friday Taylor was fined \$100. He refused to pay, stressing infringement of his constitutional rights. The judge gave him until April 10 to pay the fine or face a jail sentence. A second arrest was made during worship services in January. An editorial in the Shelbyville Kentucky Record said:

The Reverend(?) H. B. Taylor, Baptist minister at Murray, Kentucky, who made quite a reputation as a disloyal citizen a year ago and who has been fined \$100 on two separate occasions for violating the Board of Health orders in reference to closing his church while the flu ban was on,... Authorities...say he must pay up or go to jail. It would be a good idea to make him serve his time in jail and then send him out of this country, with whose principles and laws he does not seem to be in accord.

Taylor refused to pay the fine and would not let others pay. He stayed in jail two weeks, turning the cell into a virtual office. Food and other items were brought in so as nothing would be required from the jailer for his upkeep. The Louisville Times noted, "The Reverend H. Boyce Taylor, Murray, Kentucky, serving a jail sentence for violating orders from the State Board of Health, says, 'My spirit is free.' The public is not greatly interested in the souls of these martyrs(?) but there is a prevailing sentiment that their bodies are where they ought to be."

The war controversy and some Kentucky Baptists' misunderstanding of Boyce



Taylor did not lessen his support for Southern Baptist mission work as illustrated by the Seventy-Five Million Campaign. The 1919 Atlanta Southern Baptist Convention challenged Southern Baptists to raise \$75,000,000 in five years "in view of the need of the world and this hour and...the numbers and ability of Baptists...." The funds were to be used for State, Home, and Foreign Missions, Christian education, and ministerial relief. November 30, 1919 was designated as pledge day or Victory Day. The Murray church collected a special offering on this day. Members brought their gifts to a table at the front of the auditorium. Some people gave their wedding rings as well as funds. Cash gifts made to the campaign at that service totaled \$17,878.40. The following year an additional \$10,768.42 was given. The economic recession of 1921-22 caused gifts to fall below pledges but Southern Baptists had demonstrated the potential of cooperation and faithful stewardship.

In 1921 Pastor Taylor opened the West Kentucky Bible School. Classes were conducted in the pastor's home. He taught Bible and his wife taught classes in Hymnology and English. In the following years classes were also offered in Theology and Music and other skills helpful for Christian workers. At one time approximately 25-30 students were enrolled. It was a service to many individuals in West Kentucky and Tennessee who otherwise would not have been able to get a good basic education in the English Bible.

The entire Foreign Mission work of Southern Baptists has been the concern of Murray Church, but a special link with Brazil was forged during the Taylor pastorate. The experiences of the Taylor family help to understand the motivation for special interest in that vast South American country. While H. B. Taylor was a student at Southern Baptist Seminary in 1894, he wrote in a letter to his mother, "Ma, I have been called to Brazil as a missionary. I would like to go with your blessing." His widowed mother prayed that God would not take Boyce to Brazil: "I do not know how to carry on in my widowhood with-

out him. I need him to help with the baby. You can have the baby if you want him for a missionary but not my firstborn." She did not tell Boyce of her prayer request but on his next trip home asked about his going to Brazil. He replied, "No, Ma, I'm not going. I was called--I know I was called--but my call went away from me. I know now I am not called. I would not run ahead of God. I shall stay at home and be the most missionary-minded pastor here that I am capable of being." The younger son, William Cary (W. C.) whom his mother offered to the Lord, later entered the ministry, graduated from the seminary, and was ordained in Murray July 29, 1916. While pastor in Arlington, Kentucky, he felt a sudden call to go to Brazil. He wrote his mother about the decision, made 20 years after Boyce's experience. She replied, "You'll have to go my son; I gave you to God for that if he so chose long ago."

W. C. Taylor preached on August 22, 1915 concerning his work in Brazil. At the close of the service Robert Jones made public his surrender to be a missionary in Brazil. Four years later the church approved paying Bro. Jones' travel expenses to Brazil and indefinitely paying his salary. Three thousand dollars was also given in 1919 to purchase a boat for use on the Amazon River by Missionary E. A. Nelson.

In April, 1922 the Amazon Valley Faith Mission was organized in Murray. This body was formed to encourage development of missions in the Amazon Valley of Brazil. Bro. Taylor had frequently heard his brother speak of the tremendous need in the region. In 1921 Brazilian Missionary E. A. Nelson spoke in several churches of Blood River Association. Most of his nights were spent in Taylor's home "talking to me about the needs of the Amazon Valley." The debts of the Foreign Mission Board prevented sending missionaries to the area. The Amazon Valley Faith Mission was designed to supplement and work in conjunction with Southern Baptist work but eventually became an independent group

without any ties to Foreign Mission Board personnel. W. C. Taylor wrote in later years:

The commonly called "Faith Mission" that he established for this supplemental purpose in aid to our Foreign Mission Board's work came to sadden his heart and mind. Some of the men returned; others sank into immorality and most all of them fought me and my work and later him and his work. But the admiration the Baptists of America felt for him piled up a surplus of \$45,000 in the bank for that work before his death. I have letters from him expressing his deep disappointment. He never asked his church for a cent of that--did not need to for more came through the mails than could be spent.

During June-August, 1922 Bro. Taylor received a leave of absence from the church for a trip to Brazil. In his absence A. W. Pink served as interim pastor. Bro. Taylor attended the Brazilian Baptist Convention which met in First Baptist Church, Rio de Janeiro. F. F. Soren, pastor of the church, had spoken in a Murray Bible Institute. When Taylor was introduced by Bro. Soren, Dr. Love, Secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board and also visiting Brazil, arose instantly and said, "I want you to know that this man is pastor of the greatest missionary church in the world." At the time the Murray church supported 14 missionaries through the Foreign and Home Mission Boards.

An outstanding revival occurred in the fall of 1923. R. G. Bowers did the preaching October 28-November 9. Sixty-three people were baptized. On January 26, 1924 Bro. Taylor preached a sermon entitled, "Why I Am a Baptist." He stated it would be printed. The church purchased enough copies to give to every member. This message was probably the most basic description of Taylor's doctrinal stand. It is still in print, published by a Lexington church.

By a vote of 102-1 the members had decided in 1916 to build a new church. Plans were approved and efforts undertaken to secure additional land and funds. Shortly thereafter the deacons were asked to give the matter further consideration. The economic recession of 1921-22 prompted a delay in building plans

until January, 1924. At that time a committee was appointed to confer with the architect on the feasibility of remodeling and/or a new building. In April the committee recommended demolition of the old building, salvaging all usable brick and lumber and building a new church and Sunday School rooms. The church accepted the report and proceeded with plans. At the July business session final plans were approved and the building committee recommended work start on Tuesday morning, July 29. Two of the five member committee wanted to wait until more funds were in hand. The church decided to proceed and the two resigned from the committee. Demolition of the church started on July 29. Many of the members would furnish labor in cleaning bricks and other construction during the process of the work. Regular services were held during the construction period at the high school. These started in July 30, 1924. Work was suspended four months of 1926 to secure additional offerings. In October, 1926 the building committee was instructed to "do away with the choir loft in the new church and have the opening closed." Because the church had earlier decided not to borrow funds the construction period spanned two years and the interior was not complete when the building was occupied in 1927. The building was dedicated on October 25, 1936.

During the years covered by this historical sketch the Murray church took a stand on several issues facing the community. Bro. Taylor strongly denounced the lawlessness of the "Night Riders." In 1906 he wrote, "Lawlessness is abroad in our land. Tobacco houses at Princeton, Fredonia and Owensboro have recently been burned....Such men are anarchists....Such men would have joined the mob that crucified Christ." In 1908 a resolution was passed encouraging State Senator Lynn to use his influence to obtain passage by the State Legislature of the County Unit Bill. This bill was considered one of the most important issues in the state legislature at the time. It provided for liquor option elections on the county level and was vigorously supported by the Kentucky Anti-

Saloon League. The fight in Kentucky coincided with the movement toward national prohibition which started in 1919. The church agreed to donate a strip of land off the north side of the church picnic grounds to help in construction of the new county road. In 1922 the church passed a resolution condemning "mixed bathing...as conducive to evil tendencies and immorality...subject to the same discipline as dancing." In the midst of prohibition a committee was asked to draft resolutions commending "Judge Charles I. DeWeese for the firm stand he had taken in enforcing the law against illicit manufacture and sale of whiskey in violation of the eighteenth amendment of the Constitution." The church met July 29, 1930 for a special "season of prayer that the Lord would send us rain."

Friction between leaders within the fellowship increased in the mid 20's. As early as 1925 one member charged in a business session the pastor had made statements from the pulpit that were misleading, slanderous and abusive. On December 8, 1926 a motion was made and tabled to instruct the clerk not to put anything in the minutes that had not been passed on by the body. At the March 26, 1929 conference a debate occurred over withdrawing fellowship from four deacons. The differences came to a head in the fall of 1931 at the September 9 service. A motion was passed 103-4 stating the church's opposition to "any division of this body of Christ." A second motion passed 99-84 "that the indefinite call of the pastor of Murray Baptist Church terminate at the regular business meeting in October, 1931 and that we at that time call and elect a pastor for one year." Bro. Taylor vacated the chair and preferred charges against eight members for creating factions, maintaining divisions, breaking church covenant, lacking in support of the church, failing to attend church services, treating the pastor with contempt. Motion to exclude these eight members failed 18-125.

The church Rules of Decorum stipulated "any officer may be dismissed

from office when three-fourths of the church shall think proper." Support was lacking for a direct motion to dismiss Bro. Taylor. The Pastor had been quite strong in his opposition to a yearly call; when the church voted to reinstate the yearly call, Taylor asked for his church letter. No record is found of his resignation as Pastor.

At the October 7 business meeting the rules were suspended to proceed with the election of a pastor. J. E. Skinner, a former resident of Murray, was nominated. He had preached a revival earlier in the year at the Murray church. H. B. Taylor was also nominated. A secret ballot was taken with Bro. Skinner receiving 141 votes and Bro. Taylor 121. Bro. Skinner accepted the church's call on October 11, 1931. It appears the division in the church centered around differences of opinion and dwelled on personality clashes. There was not a doctrinal issue involved. It appears also that the tension gradually developed over a period of about six years. The friction and division affected the church and the ministry as a whole was not as strong in the late 20's. The results of the vote indicated a clear division in the body, primarily centered around the leadership of Bro. Taylor. It is unfortunate a period of such significant missionary involvement should close on a note of factionalism and misunderstanding. This division must not detract from the many years of stable leadership and great missionary involvement which continues to have an impact on the present day.

C E L E B R A T I O N '87

Kentucky Baptists will celebrate their sesquicentennial year in 1987.

A. B. Colvin, Executive Associate for Communications, is leading out in planning for the year-long celebration. A special Task Group will assist in preparation and implementation of a program of celebration.

Special events include features at the State Evangelism Conference, the Kentucky Baptist Pastors Conference and the annual meeting of the Convention. The Foreign Mission Board's Appointment Service will be convened in Kentucky in April, 1987.

The Western Recorder, Review and Expositor, daily and weekly newspapers and radio and television stations will give widespread coverage to both the history of the Convention and the events of the year.

The agencies and departments will enter the spirit of the celebration with specific activities. The Historical Commission and Society will contribute to the year's program.

The greatest effort of the year will involve activities by associations and churches in their local communities. Historical pageants, dramas, musicals and other special events will acquaint our people with their history, their responsibilities and their opportunities as Kentucky Baptists.

The basic intent of Celebration '87 will be to involve people in experiences of thanksgiving for their heritage, a sense of responsibility for their present ministry and renewed hope and anticipation for the future.

We want to spend a full year in giving expressions of gratitude and evidences of a deepened spirit of Christian commitment.

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SPECIAL NOTICE: The Spencer History Volumes are being reprinted and will be available on or about September 28, 1984. The 2-volume set will retail for \$54.00 per set. It is being offered at a special pre-publication sale price of \$42.00 per set. Postage will be paid by the publisher otherwise it will be \$3.00 per set.

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## BAPTIST RESOURCES

The purpose of this page is to furnish our readers with the Title and Author of books which reflect the history of Baptists.

Gano, John. BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS OF THE LATE JOHN GANO OF FRANKFORT.  
New York: Southwick and Hardcastle. 1806.

Hickman, William. A SHORT ACCOUNT OF MY LIFE AND TRAVELS, FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS: A PROFESSED SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST.  
Originally published 1828: republished 1873 and this typed copy 1969.

Ranck, George C. THE TRAVELLING CHURCH. Louisville, Kentucky: Baptist Book Concern, 1891.

Ranck, George C. A HISTORY OF LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY.

Taylor, John. A HISTORY OF TEN CHURCHES. Cincinnati, Ohio: Art Guild Reprints, Inc.

Bond, Gladys, Dixie Froman, McDonald, John L. HISTORY OF GHENT BAPTIST CHURCH.

Newman, A. H. A CENTURY OF BAPTIST ACHIEVEMENT. Philadelphia, 1901.

Spencer, J. H. A HISTORY OF KENTUCKY BAPTISTS. Louisville, 1886: Reprinted Lafayette, Tennessee - Church History Research and Archives, 1976.

Sample, Robert Baylor. HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS OF VIRGINIA. Originally published in 1810: Revised in 1894, reprinted in 1972, Polyanthos, Inc., New Orleans, 1972: Reprinted by Church History Research and Archives Affiliation, Corp. Lafayette, Tennessee, 1976.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN BAPTISTS, Broadman Press, 1958.

Cathcart, William. BAPTIST ENCYCLOPEDIA. Philadelphia, 1883.

Masters, Frank M. A HISTORY OF BAPTISTS IN KENTUCKY. Louisville, Kentucky, 1953.

Benedict, David. HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION. First published in 1813; reprinted in 1971, Books for Libraries Press, 1971.

The Lancaster Woman's Club. PATCHES OF GARRARD COUNTY. Danville, Kentucky, Bluegrass Printing Co., 1974.

Twelve writers. BAPTISTS IN KENTUCKY 1776-1976. Edited by Leo T. Crismon, Louisville, Kentucky 1975.



A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP  
TO THE  
KENTUCKY BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Desiring to be a member of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, I hereby make application for membership.

It is my understanding that upon the payment of annual dues I will be entitled to receive all the publications of the Society for the corresponding year, as well as its other privileges.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues \$5.00 (Personal and Institutions)

Life membership \$25.00

Mail to: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society  
Kentucky Baptist Convention  
P.O. Box 43433  
Middletown, Kentucky 40243