

THE KENTUCKY
BAPTIST



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HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER OF
THE KENTUCKY BAPTIST HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

DR. LEO T. CRISMON WENDELL H. RONE, SR. GEORGE JEWELL HAROLD SANDERS
PRESIDENT-CURATOR VICE-PRESIDENT SECRETARY TREASURER
(Return Requested) 507 Byers Avenue, Owensboro, Kentucky 42301

VOLUME I, PAGES 9-16

NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 1971

A Reprint Opportunity.....

A WORD OF TRIBUTE

JOHN TAYLOR'S
Historically Famous Classic

"A HISTORY OF TEN BAPTIST CHURCHES"

First Printed in 1823 300 Pages
A Facsimile Reproduction

\$7.95

Postpaid

The Officers and Members of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society extend their deep sympathy to the family and friends of DR. DAVIS C. WOOLLEY, Executive Secretary of the Southern Baptist Historical Society, who died in Nashville on January 15, after an extended illness

This valuable book will be reprinted and made available if we can secure as many as 300 orders for it, and at the above price. Should any wish to have this classic work on early Baptist life in Virginia and Kentucky from about 1770 to 1820, fill in the order blank enclosed.

DO IT NOW!!!!

You may have the book for \$7.50 Postpaid if payment accompanies your order. Should you not be interested, pass the Order Blank on to a friend. Should we not be able to secure enough orders to guarantee republication, the money will be returned in full to all who place orders.

THINGS TO COME

MARCH 15: "J.H. SPENCER: KENTUCKY BAPTIST HISTORIAN." By Dr. Leo T. Crismon

Also an article on The First Charter of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, secured in March, 1871. This is our Centennial Year. Second Oldest Hist. Soc. in S.B.C.

Dr. Woolley had been a most courteous and considerate friend and helper to the officers of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society and Commission. All of us admired him greatly, and we feel that his service to our denomination in the field of Baptist History was most commendable. His wise leadership has led all of us to have a greater appreciation for our Baptist Heritage.

---- Wendell H. Rone, Sr.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society and Commission will be held with the Cedar Creek Baptist Church, Fern Creek, Ky., Jefferson County's oldest Baptist Church (1792), on July 23, 1971. William D. Martin, a member of our society, is the pastor. He has done a most commendable work in gathering and preserving the history of this church, which is as old as the state of Kentucky. Put this date on your calendar and plan to attend. More details later.

S.B.C. HISTORICAL COMMISSION
AND SOCIETY

The Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Society will hold its annual meeting on April 19-21, 1971, in Nashville, Tennessee, at the S.B.C. Building and Dargan-Carver Library, S.S.B. Building. This year's meetings will be saddened over the recent death of Dr. Davis C. Woolley

Members of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission and Society will attend the Nashville meeting.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP
IS GROWING RAPIDLY

Membership in the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society is growing rapidly. It is now at the highest point in its century-old history, and gives evidence of much greater growth. As of Monday, February 8th the membership stood as follows:

LIFE MEMBERSHIP (\$25.00)

Crismon, Dr. Leo T.
Southwestern Seminary (Texas)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP (\$2.50)

Allen, Hall
Badgett, Dr. J. Chester
Boyd, Mrs. Orma R.
Carlisle Ave. Baptist Church
Cavanah, Rev. George and wife
Childers, Rev. Isadore
Clark, Robert S.
Crawford, Kenneth M.D.
Crumpler, Rev. W.L.
Culver, Rev. Chester P.
Daley, Dr. C.R. Daley
Deusner, Charles
Dunn, Ronald
Easterling, C.A.
Felts, Lemuel B. and wife
Fields, Dr. Carl R.
Graves, Rev. I. Ferd
Greenfield, Rev. Harold
Hartung, Rev. William
Hatler, Rev. H.G.M. and wife
Hayes, Rev. Kenneth
Hill, Rev. C.R. and wife
Hobbs, James
Houchens, John M. and wife
Jewell, George R.
Johnson, Joe E.
Jones, Rev. Jack

(continued from left column)

Kittinger, Rev. S.A.
Martin, Rev. William D.
McQuary, William L.
Morton, Garnett B.
Neal, Miss Julia
Nichols, Charlie and wife
Pardue, T.A.
Pauley, Brantley H.
Rippeto, Rev. S. Earl
Roberts, Rev. William Austin
Rone, Wendell H. Sr.
Rone, Mrs. Wendell H. Sr.
Rowe, Rev. Simpson B.
Sanders, Dr. Harold G.
Shely, Wyatt
Smith, Mrs. Bert R.
Stinnett, Rev. L.T.
Thompson, Rev. W.W.
Tigue, Joe
Walters, Francis R. Jr.
Walters, Gifford J.
Warford, Rev. Earl
Long Run Association
(Dr. G. Allen West Jr.)
Williams, Howard
Woodring, Miss Nellie M.
Yates, Dr. O.W.
Yates, Mrs. O.W.

NOTE: Four persons left their money on the table at the August 14th, 1970, meeting at First Baptist Church, Hodgenville, but they left no name or address. Check the above list and let us know who you are.

Our goal in membership is 100 by March 31, 1971, as we observe our Centennial. The K.B.H.S. was chartered by the State of Kentucky on March 21, 1871 by legislative act. Kentucky has the second oldest Baptist Historical Society in the Southern Baptist Convention, as the North Carolina Society was chartered in 1870. Our March Newsletter will have a copy of the original charter and a brief history of the society from 1871 to 1971, the first fifty years.

Let us encourage individuals, institutions, churches, and associations to become either LIFE or ANNUAL members of this society. Our goal by 1976 is 1,000 members -- the date of our Bi-Centennial.

THE LINCOLN FAMILY AND THE BAPTISTS

By LEO T. CRISMON
President Kentucky Baptist Historical Society

A paper presented before the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, Elizabethtown, Kentucky, November 18, 1958, marking the Lincoln sesquicentennial, 1809-1959.

The Lincoln family originated in England and came by way of New England (1637), New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to Kentucky. Abraham Lincoln (1744-1786), the pioneer, left Virginia and came to Kentucky in 1782 and settled on the east branch of Floyd's Fork which later became Long Run Creek. In Virginia he was a member of a prominent family and he was also a member of the Linville Creek Baptist Church. "There is every reason to believe that this pioneer brought his religion along with him and that the Linville Creek Baptist Church had a new birth on Long Run"(1). In May, 1786, this pioneer was killed by Indians and, according to tradition, he lies buried under the present building of the Long Run Baptist Church. His family, consisting of his wife, Bathsheba or Bersheba, and three sons, Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas, moved to Washington County, north of the present town of Springfield.

Thomas Lincoln, the youngest of the sons, "who was born in the Linville Creek Church community"(2), Rockingham County, Va.(3), and brought by his parents to Long Run, grew up in Washington County, and lived and worked in the neighboring areas, including Elizabethtown. He was known especially as a skilled carpenter(4) and he had a set of tools seldom possessed by settlers in the county(5). On June 12, 1806, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were united in marriage by Jesse Head, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in a cabin then located in Washington County near Beechland, but now located in the Lincoln Marriage Temple at Harrodsburg. This latter temple, built in the form of a Cross, is designed after the old Lulbegrud Baptist Church which was erected in Kentucky in 1799(6). This marriage involved such well known and prominent persons in the area that the Washington County Circuit Court recessed on that day. It was in session Monday to Wednesday, June 9-11, it recessed June 12, and it was in session again on Friday, June 13(7).

Soon after the marriage in 1806 Thomas Lincoln and his wife began housekeeping in a cabin, constructed by him, in Elizabethtown, and here on February 10, 1807, their first child, Sarah, was born(8).

In December, 1808,(9) the Lincolns moved from Elizabethtown to the South Fork (of Nolin Creek) farm, three miles south of Hodgenville in the part of Hardin County which later became LaRue(10) where Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809. This site is at present the best known and the most widely publicized of the localities to which Lincoln is related. However, Abraham Lincoln himself did not remember that place and doubted that it could even be located(11).

Prior to May, 1811, the Lincolns removed to a cabin on the Knob Creek farm(12) on Highway 31E between Hodgenville and Bardstown, and they lived there until November, 1816. This is called Lincoln's boyhood home. He stated in a letter to Samuel Haycraft (June 4, 1860), "my earliest recollection, however, is of the Knob Creek place"(13). At this place Lincoln, with his sister, Sarah (died January 20, 1828), attended one of the few schools which he was privileged to attend(14). They attended, about 1815, a school near the present town of Ather-tonville,(15) taught by Zachariah Riney.(16)

While they lived on the Knob Creek farm, Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, who certainly must have known the Baptists in Elizabethtown and their doctrines, joined the Little Mount Baptist Church to which some of the relatives of Nancy Hanks Lincoln already belonged. This church was formed by an anti-slavery group which left the South Fork Baptist Church (located five miles south of Hodgenville, now in Lynn Association) in protest against slavery interests in the membership of the South Fork Church. One of the ministers of this church whom Abraham Lincoln heard was David Elkins (born before 1780; died after 1842)(17).

In the fall of 1816, between Thanksgiving and Christmas,(18) the Lincolns left Kentucky and, crossing the Ohio River at Hawesville,(19) they settled in what later became Spencer County, Indiana. Factors in their leaving Kentucky were: "Migratory Tendencies," "Opportunity", "Influence of Kinsmen" (some of them were already in southern Indiana), "Slavery" and "Land Titles"(20).

Although there was a Baptist church in the locality, Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, organized June 8, 1816,(21) the Lincolns for some reason did not see fit to join it, and when Nancy Hanks Lincoln died on October 5, 1818, she was still a member of the Little Mount Baptist Church in Hardin County, Ky(22). Since there was no minister nearby when she died and it was winter, a funeral sermon was delayed until the spring of 1819, when at the insistence of her son Abraham, he writing a letter, a request was sent for David Elkins, a former minister of her church, Little Mount, of the Hodgenville community in Kentucky, to come to Indiana and to conduct the memorial service(23).

"Nancy Hanks Lincoln was a woman of rare qualities of mind and heart, and though she died in 1818, when her son was only nine years old, she left impressions upon him which could never be effaced, and which directed his whole future movements. 'All that I am on earth,' said President Lincoln to Rev. A. D. Gillette, then of Washington City, 'I owe to my Baptist mother. I am glad to see you, doctor; you remind me of my Baptist mother'.(24)"

Thomas Lincoln, after the death of his first wife, returned to Elizabethtown and married Sarah Bush Johnston, on December 2, 1819, a widow and the mother of three children. The site of the house in which this wedding took place is marked by a bronze plaque, a few hundred feet north east of the Court House. He took his wife and her

three children back to Indiana with him where she assumed the responsibility for caring for his two children also. On June 7, 1823, Thomas Lincoln joined the Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church by letter from the Little Mount Baptist Church and his wife joined "by experience"(25).

The only sister of Abraham Lincoln, Sarah, who married Aaron Grigsby on August 2, 1826, joined Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church four months prior (Apr. 8, 1826) to her wedding, and when she died on January 20 1828, she was one of the first to be buried in the new burial gound of the church(26).

In regard to the building erected by this church in 1821(27) a sketch found in the history of Spencer County, Indiana, states:

Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln, made the window and door casings, the pulpit, etc. Abraham Lincoln did some of the work on the building, and often went to church there(28).

When the building needed repair in 1825 Thomas Lincoln was appointed as one of three trustees to attend to the matter(29).

Thomas Lincoln belonged to this church until, at his own request, he was granted a letter of dismissal on December 12, 1829 just prior to his leaving for Illinois. During these years he attended the services of the church regularly, he served on committees, was moderator, served as a trustee, was a messenger of the church at meetings of the association, and contributed to the support of the church(30).

There is evidence that Abraham Lincoln, as a boy between the ages of 14 and 19 years, was for a time the sexton of this Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church(31). This implied attendance upon the services of the church, along with other influences pointed out above, shows that the formative years of President Abraham Lincoln were spent in a religious atmosphere which was predominantly Baptist. This sketch is concluded with the removal of the family to Illinois in 1830, soon after which Lincoln left the influences of his father's home to go out on his own(32).

Abraham Lincoln, according to most authentic sources, never joined a church. In 1846 he wrote, "That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular(33)."

The statement most often quoted from Lincoln in regard to his religious connection is as follows: "When any church will inscribe over its altar as a sole qualification for membership, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all they heart and with all they mind, and they neighbor as theyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul(34)."

In 1864 Lincoln said to Joshua Speed, of Louisville, in regard to the Bible, ". . . take all this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier and better man(35)."

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30. Nowlin, Wm. D., op. cit., p. 189; Lincoln Lore No. 87; Minutes of Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, 1823-1830
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+++++ "KENTUCKY PREPARES TO MARK ITS 200th ANNIVERSARY" +++++

So reads a caption over an article in the Courier-Journal, on February 7 (B-2), written by Miss Ann Pardue, Staff Writer.

In the articles she tells of Governor Louie B. Nunn appointing Mr. Clyde M. Webb to be the Chairman of The Kentucky Historical Events Celebration Commission, which will formulate plans to aid the State of Kentucky in obser-

ving the 200th anniversary of the founding of Fort Harrod and the 100 running of the Kentucky Derby.

While we Baptists may not be too thrilled about the Derby Celebration, we are vitally interested in the Fort Harrod Celebration in 1974, for it was there in April, 1776 that Thomas Tinsley and William Hickman preached the first recorded Baptist Sermons on Kentucky soil.

The History "bug" is biting more and more persons. Amen!

JOHN TAYLOR

1752-1835 KY. BAPTISTS'
PIONEER
HISTORIAN

JOHN TAYLOR, pioneer Baptist minister, farmer, and author, was born in Fauquier County, Virginia, on October 27, 1752; and died in Frankfort, Kentucky, on April 12, 1835.

According to Spencer (I,54) his father wasted his estate through intemperance, and young Taylor was brought up to hard labor on a farm. While he was a youth his parents moved over the Blue Ridge mountains and settled on the Shenandoah river, in Frederick county. Here at the age of seventeen, he heard the gospel preached for the first time. The preacher was that valiant pioneer Virginia and Kentucky minister, William Marshall. He was strongly affected by Marshall's preaching, and resolved to listen to him no more. But he was unable to throw off the impressions of the Spirit concerning his guilt of sin, After intense reading of the Bible and much prayer. A revival prevailed under the preaching of Marshall and the brothers, Joseph and Isaac Redding, both of whom became valuable preachers in Kentucky were converted and baptized. They began holding revival meetings in the area after their conversion. Having been intimate associates with Taylor in sinful amusements, he began to attend their meetings. His conviction of sin was deepened and continued for many months. At last, he found peace in Christ and was baptized by James Ireland, in his twentieth year.

Young Taylor immediately felt a call to enter the ministry, and after meeting with Joseph Redding in South Carolina, the two returned to Virginia and commenced laboring together in spreading the gospel. For about ten years, sometimes with Redding or others, Taylor devoted himself to preaching the gospel in the frontier settlements among the western pioneer settlers. God crowned his labors with abundant success. He helped Joseph Redding to found Lunie's Creek Church in 1783 and became pastor of South River (later Happy Creek) after William Marshall moved to Kentucky in 1781.

In the fall of 1779, Taylor visited Kentucky for the first time, traveling across the mountains on horseback. Joseph Redding had started at the same time to come down the Ohio River on a flat boat. He reached Louisville in the spring of 1780, after being detained. Illness in Redding's family, and the death of one child, led to a determination to return to Virginia. Taylor, also being discouraged at the low state of religious faith in Kentucky, joined him in the return to their former fields of labor.

However, in the fall of 1783, having married and received a small amount of property from a deceased uncle, Taylor determined to return to Kentucky and make it his permanent home. Coming down the Redstone and Ohio rivers he came to Beargrass Creek (Louisville) in seven weeks. He then traveled overland to Craig's Station on Gilbert's Creek in Lincoln County, arriving there a little before Christmas, and about three months after starting from Virginia. Craig's Station was located near what is now Lancaster, in Garrard County. While here he was a member of Lewis Craig's famous "Traveling Church" which had come to Kentucky in the fall of 1781.

After remaining at Craig's Station for about seven months, Taylor moved north of the Kentucky River into Fayette (now Woodford) County onto his own land. This hardy pioneer cleared his ground for planting and erected a simple log cabin for his family.

In the winter of 1784-85 the first religious revival in "Upper Kentucky" took place in the cabins of the settlers in this area, with Taylor being the leader. This resulted in the organization of the famous Clear Creek Church, in April, 1785. Thirty members were in the constitution, including four ordained Baptist preachers: John Taylor, William Cave, James Rucker, and John Dupuy. Clear Creek was organized out of South Elkhorn Church (1783) which had been organized by Lewis Craig out of the "Traveling Church" members from Gilbert's Creek who moved north of the Kentucky River prior to Taylor's removal. Taylor had been a member of both Gilbert's Creek and South Elkhorn.

In October, 1785, Elkhorn Association was organized at Clear Creek Church, and Taylor was in the constitution. Taylor became pastor of Clear Creek in 1786 and continued three years. He continued to minister until 1794 within the membership, when he helped Joseph Redding to constitute Bullitsburg in June, 1794, and moved among them the following month. This was in Scott (1792) County, and later Campbell (1795) and Boone (1799).

In 1800 Taylor assisted in establishing Corn Creek Church in upper Henry County near the Ohio River. It is now in Trimble County. He was in the constitution of Big Spring Spring (1812), Frankfort, First (1816), and Buck Run (1818) Churches. These churches, together with all the others in Kentucky and Virginia which he held membership in from 1772 until 1823 formed the subject of his famous Baptist historical classic, published first in 1823 and republished in 1827, entitled A HISTORY OF TEN BAPTIST CHURCHES--"which the author has been alternately a member." Through this fifty year span Taylor was very active in Elkhorn, Franklin, and Long Run Associations.

A rather prosperous farmer, Taylor received very little remuneration from the churches he pastored. It is a part of the sad commentary of his latter life that he opposed Luther Rice and the missionary interests, publishing in 1819, a pamphlet entitled THOUGHTS ON MISSIONS, which he later seemed to regret having written. Although he wavered in aligning himself with the leaders of missionary Baptists in Kentucky in the missions controversy, upon the rise of Campbellism in the last half of the 1820's, he stood firm in his support of Baptists from his very first meeting with Alexander Campbell. In 1830, to help combat the vagaries of Campbell he published the HISTORY OF CLEAR CREEK CHURCH AND CAMPBELLISM EXPOSED. Campbell had some rather unkind remarks to make against Taylor, but the old veteran stood his ground.

It must be noted that Taylor returned to Clear Creek Church as a laboring minister, until they could secure a pastor, in early 1822. He had been called as pastor, but only agreed to serve as interim. In that time the old church was greatly revived and "more than 160 were baptized." The revival continued over a year and the church regained her former greatness. Taylor baptized about one half of the about one thousand members who had entered by experience and baptism between 1785 and 1823. His history came from the press about this time. He thus became the first historian of note among Kentucky Baptists.

Some unknown writer said of him: "HE TRAVELED AND PREACHED VERY EXTENSIVELY, AND PROBABLY PERFORMED MORE LABOR AND WAS MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN ANY OTHER PIONEER PREACHER IN KENTUCKY."

--- Wendell H. Rone, Sr.