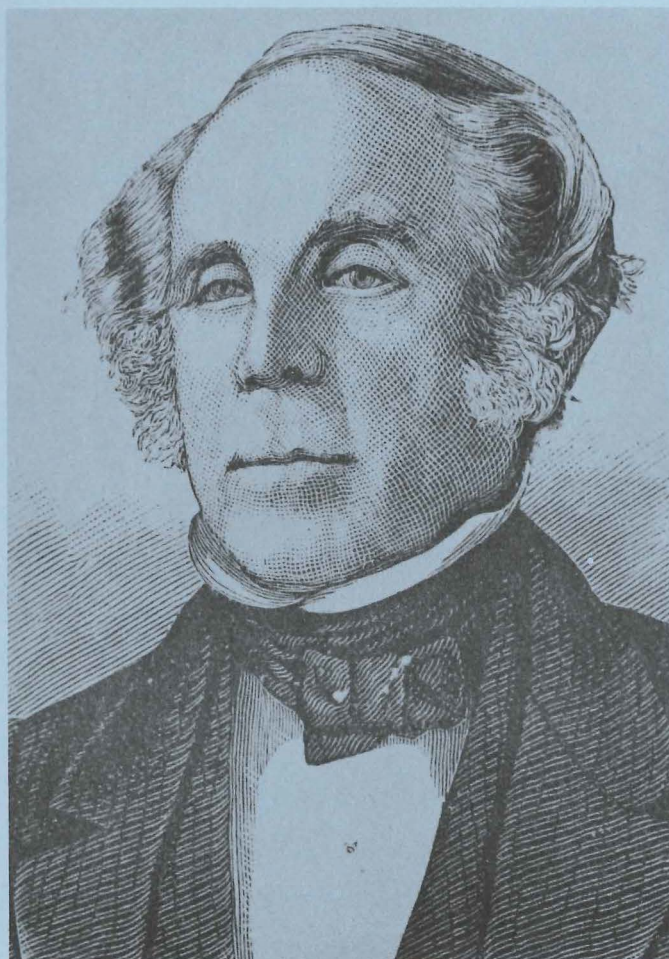


THE
KENTUCKY BAPTIST

HERITAGE



W. C. Buck

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

KENTUCKY
BAPTIST
HERITAGE

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NEW PUBLICATION

Society members will be interested in this new publication relating to Kentucky Baptist History:

Gathered At The River, by Ira V. (Jack) Birdwhistell, is a narrative history of Long Run Baptist Association (the Louisville area).

The paperback volume is available from the Long Run Baptist Association, 400 East Chestnut Street, Louisville, Kentucky 40202, Price \$3.00.

Of the early Americans who moved in covered wagons to settle the west, it was said, "The cowards never started and the week died along the way."

SOCIETY NEWS--

The annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission and Historical Society will be in Richmond, Kentucky, July 27, 1979. We already have an invitation for 1980 to meet in the historic Maysville area.

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This issue of Kentucky Baptist Heritage features aspects of Kentucky Baptists' BOLD MISSION THRUST of the past. W. C. Buck (1790-1872) whose portrait graces our cover, was one of our most fervent supporters of bold missionary enterprises. In nearly twenty-five years of ministry in Kentucky, he espoused several noteworthy mission causes. We print here an excerpt from a brief "Life of W. C. Buck," written years ago by his daughter, Mrs. Emma Buck Harrison of Waco, Texas.

Larry Smith, a graduate student in History of Missions at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written a fine article on Kentucky Baptists' work with the Indians, which, incidentally, was one of W. C. Buck's interests. Larry is a deacon at Deer Park Baptist Church in Louisville, and a faithful member of our Society. The editor desires more contributions of this quality for our journal.

Send all materials for publication to:

Jack Birdwhistell
First Baptist Church
Drakesboro, Kentucky 42347

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!!

This excerpt from Mrs. Harrison's life of her father takes up his story with Buck as a journeyman preacher in Virginia.

"LIFE OF W. C. BUCK"

William Buck attended all these [revival] meetings and was frequently invited, but he could not exhort without weeping and this became such a sore trial to him that he could not speak in public, though always leading in prayer when called on. He suffered for four years between a sense of duty and a desire to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men, on the one hand, and the sense of his disqualification and fear of running before he was sent, on the other hand. On August 22, 1812, he was licensed to preach. He was twenty-two years old the next day. For two years he traveled extensively so that there were few counties in middle and lower Virginia where he had not preached.

He was now First Lieutenant of the troop of cavalry before mentioned. They were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning, but were not called into service 'till 1814 when they were ordered to duty near Richmond. After a few months they were discharged and he returned to the duties of the ministry and the care of his father's farm.

He was ordained to the full work of the ministry in September 1815. Shortly afterward Water Lick Church called him as its pastor, which place he filled until the spring of 1820, when he moved to Union County, Kentucky. His oldest brother, Thomas, was a member of the church several years before William joined but did not enter the ministry until sometime after William did.

Among the earliest efforts of the Bible operations in the U.S. was the organization in 1812 or 1813 of the Frederick County Bible Society, the Board of which was located in Winchester. William Buck was one of the managers and it was merged into the American Bible Society. In the spring of 1814, a missionary society was founded at Zion Meeting House, called the Baptist Missionary

Society of Frederick County, Virginia. He was elected corresponding secretary and this society, though not represented, was one of the first missionary societies, which entered into the old Trinennial Convention. Shortly after this the beloved Luther Rice visited that part of Virginia and William Buck entered into his spirit and plans and traveled considerably with him, aiding in the great missionary work and in procuring subscriptions to found Columbian College in Washington, D. C.

As soon as he had settled his family in Union County, Kentucky, he began to penetrate the forest and search for the inhabitants and arrange for cultivating the vast field, large enough for at least one hundred ministers. The only house for Baptist preaching was a little log cabin about twenty miles off. The church was without a preacher and scarcely existing. There were a few Methodists and Cumberland Presbyterians in the country. Roman Catholicism and lawlessness characterized the balance of the people. The Sabbath was the day set apart for hunting, drinking and carousing. When reproved for Sabbath breaking, the people said, "The Sabbath has not arrived here yet." Appointments were made for preaching in the woods or wherever the people could be gathered to hear the word of life. The little church of Highland called him to its pastoral care. Congregations grew larger and they erected a larger and better house. In a few years it grew to be quite a strong body. He also constituted another church, called Little Bethel, about six miles from his home. The rest of his time was spent in visiting and preaching in neighborhoods near and remote. Bibles were bought with his own means and given to the people who had none. The Catholic priests were very angry and took the Bible from their people, telling them that they were not true Bibles, but that they were "Buck's Bibles." The next lot of Bibles were loaned to the people with [the] instruction that if the priests demanded them they were to say the books belonged to Mr. Buck and he would not allow them to take his property. One day while he was preaching, a Catholic young man rose up in the back part of the audience and ex-

claimed "If it were not for your broad shoulders, your head would not stay on them long!" This young man was later converted and baptized by Elder Buck and became his warm personal friend.

He [Buck] was married December 1, 1815, to Miss Maria Lewright of Jefferson County, Virginia, a lady of lovely character with whom he lived happily until her death January 8, 1822. The mother and two little daughters died within three weeks and were buried at Highland meeting house. He had no one to take care of his two remaining children and if he stayed at home to protect them it meant to abandon the ministry which he couldn't think of doing, so he resolved to carry them to their grandparents in Virginia. It was a long journey to go by private conveyance, having the care of two little children, one two years old, the other four. For seven years he spent the summers in Virginia, traveling and preaching where he could occasionally visit his children, and in the fall returning to Kentucky and preaching to the two churches and in destitute places round about.

In the fall of 1826, while on his way from Virginia, friends in Richmond, Kentucky, informed him of the sad state of things in Lexington, Kentucky. The church had been split, about half of them going off with Dr. Fishback in his heterodox views. The congregation left was small and discouraged. He went to Lexington, became acquainted with the people and their difficulties, and gaining their confidence received an invitation to preach to them one Sabbath in the month. The small congregation soon increased so that their large house was filled with hearers. While he was thus operating in Lexington, a call came from Georgetown, that as he valued the Glory of God and the salvation of their children, to come over and arrest the Unitarian influence of Barton Stone, which was carrying everything before it. He considered it a Macedonian cry, told the church at Lexington of his intention, and went immediately to Georgetown. Appointments were made for preaching morning and afternoon on Friday, the second day after his arrival. The little church was without a pastor,

religion was at a low ebb, and everything looked unpromising; but the Lord came and made His power known and felt. A great revival began, preaching continued every day and often twice a day for some time, one hundred and twenty-five were baptized, forty-two of whom professed to have received their first impressions under the two sermons preached the first day.

As soon as he could leave Georgetown, he returned to Lexington. The church engaged him to preach to them three Sabbaths in the month, Elder Jeremiah Vardeman occupying the other Sabbath. Very soon the revival spirit showed itself and the congregations were so large that the Medical Hall which they had rented would not hold the people. About one hundred fifty were baptized, so that the church was doubly as strong as before the unhappy rupture. The spirit of revival sprang in all directions from Georgetown, so that during the year 1827, there was a greater accession to the churches of Elkhorn and Franklin Associations than had ever been. Over three hundred were added to the (Great) Crossings Church under Silas M. Noel. In the spring of 1828, he went to visit his children and came back to Kentucky in the fall as usual. On June 30, 1829, he married Mrs. Miriam Field of Woodford County, Kentucky. They spent the summer in Virginia and returned in the fall to Kentucky, where he again settled on his farm and engaged in his former course of ministerial labor.

In 1833, the long and continued illness of his wife and some other afflictions caused him to think he was not in the right place. He resolved to throw himself upon the Lord's guidance and go where he might direct, so he sold his stock and rented out his farm that he might be ready to go in any direction at a short notice. For the recovery of her health, Mrs. Buck had gone to her father's in Woodford County. While visiting there, the churches at Georgetown, Clear Creek, [Buck's] and Crossings sent committees to secure his services. He agreed to preach once a month for each. Afterwards the

church at Lexington called him to preach once a month. He bought a small farm in Woodford County, where he remained until he moved to Louisville in 1836.

Efforts has been made for four or five years to settle him in Louisville. But believing himself better adapted to the country than the city, he had violently opposed every thing of the kind. Two years before, the church in Louisville gave an urgent call, but he positively refused. Now when this second call came and he prayed over it and thought of his afflictions in Union County and solemn vows to go wherever the Lord directed, he was afraid to refuse lest he should offend God, so he accepted the call and moved to Louisville in April, 1836. He found upward of one-hundred twenty members enrolled, but upon investigation it was found that about fifty had died, moved off, or gone back into the world unaccounted for, so that left only about seventy identified in the church. The church was so little known in the city that strangers inquiring for the Baptist Church at the hotels or business houses were frequently told that they didn't know of any such church in the city or if they knew of its existence, could tell neither the location of the house or any of its members. The house was a fine one and stood in a prominent place, but the Masons occupied the upper part of it, and it was known as the Masonic Hall and not as the Baptist Church. When he resigned the care of the church in the latter part of 1839 there were two hundred forty members, and the African department had received an accession of about two hundred members, most of whom he had baptized, making four hundred forty in all.

One thing that soon made the Baptist church and its pastor well and favorably known was his efforts in behalf of the boatmen and river operatives, and the meetings held in the church for that purpose. During this year, also (he met) Rev. I. J. Roberts, whose offer of himself as missionary to China and his landed estate valued at twenty-five thousand dollars to be used for his support had been declined by the foreign board at Boston. He (Roberts) came to Louisville and applied to Elder Buck to take

charge of his estate and let him go to China as a missionary. Accordingly, a society was organized, "The Roberts Fund and China Mission Society of China (Kentucky)." He (Roberts) was set apart in the First Church of Louisville to that mission and left America the same year. He prohibited the board from selling the property before the spring of 1837, but, also, the terrible monetary crash came upon the country. The lands of Mississippi became worthless, the board had no funds in their hands to pay taxes, and the land was ultimately sold to pay those taxes. This ended the Roberts Fund. The result of I. J. Robert's labors in China will only be known in eternity.

About this time the Washingtonian Temperance reform took its rise in Baltimore. Pastor Buck, having been greatly afflicted by the intemperate habits of some of his members and perplexed as to what practicable and suitable measures should be adopted to address the evil, became satisfied that the discipline of the church could not be applied to save the persons from becoming drunkards, and then only to cut them off fallen and ruined. He resolved to set up a Teetotal Temperance Society and if possible to get them to join it. He published a call meeting of the citizens of the Baptist Church, made a speech and made weekly appointments for a time. The cold water doctrine at length triumphed and they organized a society of about two hundred forty members. This was the first Teetotal Society west of the mountains.

In this same year, 1837, the first meeting of the General Association of Kentucky was held in the Baptist Church of Louisville. Pastor Buck wrote its constitution and also acted as its agent for three months in each of the two succeeding years. While acting in the capacity, he paid brethren to fill his pulpit in Louisville, bore his own traveling expenses and took no salary from the General Association, lest the opponents should say he labored for gain. He also raised salaries for many of the pastors and succeeded in correcting the universal error in ministers and churches that ministerial salaries were unscriptural.

At one church where he went, the pastor permitted him to occupy the pulpit but was far from being in sympathy with the idea of raising a stated salary. Some of the members were much opposed to Elder Buck's views. He told them that the churches were starving because they robbed God, that they that preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel, etc., that God would bless them in doing their duty but if they did not honor him with their substance He would put a blasting mildew on their crops, rot and murrain on their cattle, fire and storms to destroy their houses and barns and diseases and death into their families. The pastor's salary was raised and paid to him.

One member, a lady who lived in the country, was very angry and said some harsh things about Buck and his preaching. Some time after this a servant came to this lady and said, "Mistress, one of the sheep is dead." She replied, "Well, take off the skin and save it." The next morning the report was, "Mistress, three of the sheep is dead." The next day the number reported was still larger when she exclaimed, "O dear me, well, cut off the wool and I will have to have it spun and knit into socks and send them to Buck and see if he won't ask the Lord to stop the sheep from dying."

When he went to Louisville, he had been preaching nearly twenty-four years, and yet in that time he had not received in presents and money as much as seven hundred fifty dollars. The church promised a stated salary but it was never all paid. His expenses were very heavy for so few male members of the church were keeping house that most of the Baptist company that visited the city put up at his house, so that it was called the Baptist tavern. Hitherto, he had lived on a farm and had relied on that for a support but now he was depending on the church. He felt it his duty to employ his property, as well as his ministerial talent in the service of the Lord.

He was induced to buy an interest in the Banner and Pioneer* and edit it; he subsequently became its sole proprietor. He put new life into the paper, increased its cir-

ulation, and widened its influence. But to him the ten years of his connection with the paper were years of unremitting labor and anxiety.

His trusting, generous disposition led him to trust too much to the professions of friendship and honesty of other people. His entire attention was occupied in editing the paper and compiling The Baptist Hymn Book, which was at one time extensively used through the south and west. The business of the office was committed to those (in) whom he had confidence, but through the mismanagement of some and dishonesty of others, he was almost bankrupt when he sold out in May, 1850.

In the fall of 1839, he commenced a mission station in a school house on Preston Street, where he preached morning and night and superintended the Sunday School. In the spring, when the weather became pleasant, he preached in the market house between Floyd and Preston Streets, from which the rowdy German Catholics attempted to drive him but failed. In the fall of 1840, he built a neat brick church house, forty feet square, on his own lots on Green Street between Floyd and Preston and, though [it was] not finished, he preached in it that winter. The next spring, he had it handsomely plastered, painted, and pewed. As soon as the house was finished, a small church was formed called the East Church. He, with his wife and a few others were in the constitution. He preached to them seven years without fee or reward, superintended the Sunday School, furnished sexton, lights, and fuel for two years until the church was able to relieve him of those minor expenses.

After the church grew stronger, he resigned his care of it, thinking it better for them to call a pastor and pay him.

*Kentucky Baptist weekly paper which became the Western Recorder.

Finally, he was compelled to sell the house to pay the debts of the printing office, and the East Church bought lots not far off. About the time he held the mission on Preston Street, the Presbyterian Church in Jeffersonville, Indiana split into Old School and New School. He was invited by the majority to preach in their house and he preached alternately there and on Preston Street. In a short while, he baptized eight of the principal Presbyterian members and constituted a Baptist Church. He soon built them a snug house and [they] called him as pastor for half his time. He served them for ten months

In February, 1851, he moved to Georgetown to educate his children. At the Southern Baptist Convention in May, 1851, a Bible Board was formed and he was elected Corresponding Secretary. In June, [he] moved to Nashville.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Buck was subsequently pastor in Columbus, Mississippi (1845-1857); pastor in Alabama and publisher of THE BAPTIST CORRESPONDENT; "missionary" among the Confederate troops; and superintendent of an orphan's home in Mississippi. Removing to Texas in 1866, he died in Waco, May 18, 1872.

J. H. Spencer described him thusly: "gifted by nature with a ringing, powerful voice, fluent speech, and a retentive memory, he was unsurpassed as a platform speaker. He was an earnest worker in all enterprises of the denomination."

There is hardly any product on earth that someone cannot make worse and sell cheaper. He who considers price only is this man's lawful prey.

--John Ruskin

The following was delivered to the Kentucky Baptist Convention, meeting in Owensboro in November, 1978, by the editor.

"A KENTUCKY BAPTIST MISSIONS' PARAPHRASE OF HEBREWS 11."

--Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.

- By faith, William Hickman went out to Kentucky in 1776, preaching the first sermon at Harodstown (now Harrodsburg);
- By faith, the Traveling Church moved lock, stock, barrel, and Bible over the mountains into the new Kentucky territory;
- By faith, John Taylor and Amborse Dudley went out from Kentucky to Middle Tennessee in 1791, founding the first Baptist Church in that region;
- By faith, the Buck Creek Church in Shelby County sent George Waller and William McCoy to plant churches in Indiana;
- By faith, Isaac McCoy, son of a Kentucky pastor, gave his life as a missionary to the Indian tribes of the Old Northwest;
- By faith, W. C. Buck, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Louisville, traveled the state in the 1830's on behalf of mission causes;
- By faith, Tarleton Perry Crawford of Warren County went out to China as a missionary in 1851, serving nearly half a century;
- By faith, Dexter G. Whittinghill of Western Kentucky served in Italy from 1900 to 1939;
- By faith, W. Eugene Sallee went out to China in 1903; and Miss Flora Dodson of Somerset served there from 1917 until the 1950's;
- By faith, W. C. and Grace Taylor went out to Brazil in 1915 and Lewis Malen Bratcher followed in 1918;
- By faith, Emma Leachman of Washington County served the poor and the downtrodden of Louisville through Hope Rescue Mission;
- By faith, L. R. Brothers of Hopkins County went out to Nigeria in 1936;
- By faith, Neville Claxon of Switzer and his wife Emma of Frenchburg went out to

the Gold Coast in 1948.

By faith, Dewey Mercer of Central City took his family to Japan in 1955.

By faith, Freda Harris has given her life going into the homes of the "forgotten people" in the "hollers" of Eastern Kentucky;

By faith, Gerald and June McNeely serve in Spain; Bill McElrath in Indonesia; Wiley Faw in Nigeria; Jim and Betty McKinley in Bangladesh;

And what shall I say more? For the time would fail me to tell of state missionaries such as Miss Annie Allen and Miss Minnie Berry; of Journeymen such as William Kruschwitz and Margaret Hill; of the scores of Kentucky Baptist college students who have gone as summer missionaries; of Kentucky Baptist pastors who have left lucrative positions for pioneer areas; of men's groups who have gone out to Central America to work and to witness; of youth groups that have conducted VBS in pioneer churches---

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the righthand of the throne of God."

KENTUCKY BAPTIST MISSIONS TO THE INDIANS

1776 - 1860

by

Larry Douglas Smith

Few Indians lived in Kentucky when the first white settlers came. The Iroquois Indians retained the land as part of their game reserves, although other tribes would occasionally send hunting parties into the

state. Several attempts to form settlements in the state were destroyed by the Iroquois. Chickasaw tribesmen lived along the Mississippi River on land which would eventually become known as the Jackson purchase. Until the 1818 treaty with the tribe, neither Indians nor whites considered that area as part of the state.

Spencer long ago recognized that Kentucky Baptists from the beginning "were missions minded." (Vol. I, p. 107) The evangelistic zeal which was part of their Separate Baptist heritage proved the foundation of their missionary spirit. The Great Revival (1800-1802) was another factor which deeply affected the state's Baptists during their early development.

The old South Elkhorn Church brought before the Elkhorn Association in 1801 a request to send missionaries to the Indians. John Young, a member of that church, was ordained and commissioned for this purpose. His mission to the Indians around the Great Lakes was ineffective because he lacked adequate ability to preach in the Indian languages. Apparently the person whom he employed to translate intentionally distorted the message which the missionary brought.

Missionary societies played an important part in the development of missions among Kentucky Baptists. Over forty-seven societies in the state were engaged in both home and foreign missions. About most, very little is known. The most important was the Kentucky Mission Society, which also appeared with several other names. This group began a school for the education of Indians near Georgetown in 1819. After three years of hope and disappointment, however, the school was abandoned.

At the same time that the missionary societies were being formed, some of the state's associations began missions on their own. Starke Dupuy had wanted the Long Run Association to send missionaries to the Indians as early as 1810, but that

effort came to naught. Dupuy was later a missionary of the Triennial Convention to the Choctaw Indians. The association, influenced by the 1815 visit of Luther Rice, sent Isasc McCoy west where he was to preach primarily to the white settlers, but also to the Indians. The North Bend Association sought to advance western missions, as they were called, but could not find anyone to go. It donated over one-hundred dollars which it had raised for that purpose to the Kentucky Mission Society.

For the most part, however, local missionary groups played only a small role in Baptist missions. Most societies were part of the General Missionary Convention, which played the largest role at this time in Baptist missions to the Indians. The aid which was given to missions by these smaller societies was collected mostly in supplies with only a moderate amount in hard cash. A wide variety of necessities ranging from clothes to sheep was collected. Much of this help (at least that which has been recorded) went to Isaac McCoy and the Indians to whom he ministered.

One of the most successful projects was undertaken by an individual Baptist. Richard M. Johnson (later a vice-president of the United States) began a school for Indian boys near his Georgetown home in 1825. A Baptist preacher, Thomas Henderson, was the principal of the school for which the Triennial Convention appointed all Baptists to the Board of Trustees. The figures are fragmentary, but this author estimates that over 500 Indians spent some time, ranging from a few months to several years, studying at this school. The academy was closed around 1845 because of Johnson's loss of political popularity.

The American Indian Mission Association was organized in 1842, largely as the result of Isaac McCoy's efforts. Though formed in Cincinnati, its headquarters were in Louisville where McCoy lived. The association sought support throughout the Mississippi Valley, but Kentucky Baptists were the most prominent in its support. At high tide it supported 33 missionaries and associates,

and included over 1300 Indians who were baptized into churches affiliated with it.

The association was merged with the Domestic Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1855. Through the Domestic and Indian Board, as the combined board was called, the Elkhorn Association voted in 1858 to fully support one Indian missionary. The secretary of the Board recommended that they support an Indian whose name was Do-nah-na-lah (his English name was Foster). A similar arrangement was concluded with the Long Run Association the following year, assigning H. F. Buckner, who had previously lived in Kentucky, for their support. These efforts were abandoned as a casualty of the sectional conflict.

Kentucky Baptists have made several important efforts to convert Indians, but most of these had fewer results than was hoped. After this time missions would increasingly be in the hands of larger, denominational groups, who, it was thought, could handle and sustain missions at a more effective and systematic level.



"LET ME GIVE"

I do not know how long I'll live
 But while I live, Lord, let me give
 Some comfort to someone in need
 By smile or nod--kind word or deed
 And let me do what e'er I can
 To ease things for my fellow man.
 I want naught but to do my part
 To "lift" a tired or weary heart.
 To change folks frowns to smiles again--
 Then I will not have lived in vain
 And I'll not care how long I'll live
 If I can give--and give--and give.

