

T H E  
K E N T U C K Y B A P T I S T  
H E R I T A G E



"OLD BRACKEN BAPTIST CHURCH"

*constituted June, 1793*

*Minerva, Kentucky*

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

"HISTORY OF THE BRACKEN BAPTIST CHURCH"  
Minerva, Kentucky

The Bracken Baptist Church, located in Mason County near the lovely little village of Minerva, Kentucky, was constituted in June, 1793, from ten members who had been dismissed from the Washington Baptist Church, Washington, Kentucky. Rev. Lewis Craig, who had moved into this section in 1792 after leaving the pastorate of South Elkhorn Baptist Church which was situated near the city of Lexington, Kentucky, led in the organization of this church. The records, for the most part, have been lost, but we find in the Minutes of the Elkhorn Baptist Association that Mr. Craig was the first pastor. In 1795, the church, with a membership of forty-five members united with the Elkhorn Association. Lewis Craig was one of the organizers of this association in 1785. After the formation of the Bracken Association in 1799, the Bracken Church, with a membership of 156, united with this Association. The Bracken meeting house, then located 500 yards northwest of the Village of Minerva was the appointed place for the formation of Bracken Association. Her pastor, Lewis Craig, was one of the leaders in this meeting. At this time there were four ordained preachers in her membership; Phillip Drake, Lewis Craig, William Holton and John King. One or the other served her as pastor during the early history of the church.

The 10 members who went into the constitution of the church were; Phillip Drake, Ann Drake, Bernard Thompson and his wife, Mary Lewis, Mary Downing, Thomas Kelsor, Elizabeth Murphy, Hannah Kelsor and Dennis Murphy.

As early as 1805 there was a crisis which divided this little flock into two divisions. The crisis was the slavery question which plagued many churches at this time. Rev. James Thompson was the pastor of the Anti-Slavery division. Rev. Thompson was a native of Scotland, and had immigrated to America in his youth. He arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 8, 1767. At this time, he was sold as an indentured servant for three years to pay for his passage across the ocean. He married during his servitude. When the time of his service expired in 1780, he moved to Virginia. Here, under the preaching of Rev. Henry Hagan, he professed faith in the Lord, and although he had been raised a Presbyterian, was baptized by Mr. Hagan into the fellowship of a Baptist Church. The next year he was drafted into the Army. At the return of peace, he moved to Bracken County, Kentucky, where he was set apart to the Gospel Ministry, and gave the evening of his life to the preaching of the Word of God. He was regarded as a man of sincerity, as well as a sound Gospel preacher. At the same time, we find Rev. William Holton of the Pro-Slavery group in the area. Both groups occupied the same meeting house. He continued as pastor until 1815. The split was finally healed by the dissolution of the Anti-Slavery Association in the state.

Jesse Holton became pastor of the United Church in 1815, and continued as pastor until 1829, when he went over to the Campbell Movement. Of the 288 members, Mr. Holton carried 251 members into the Campbellite camp. This left only 37 members in the old Baptist church. The adherents to the Campbell Movement assumed control of the church building which was a pattern everywhere they were able to sway the majority of the congregations that soon became apparent. The Baptists were allowed to conduct their services when the Campbell Services were not in session. After the split Rev. Gilbert Mason became pastor of the Bracken Baptist Church, and preached for several years. Mr. Mason was born in Bedford County, Virginia, June 1810. In 1820, at the age of ten, his parents moved to Franklin County, Kentucky. Here Mr. Mason, at the age of eleven, professed faith under the preaching of Rev. J. B. Jeter and Rev. Daniel Wills, and was baptized into the fellowship of Bethel

Baptist Church. He was immediately asked to engage in public prayer, and early in his thirteenth year, he was fully licensed to preach. Although compelled to labor continually on his father's farm, he preached at night during the week and on Sunday. After laboring for a year or two in this manner, he was permitted to live a year with Rev. Abner Anthony to study under him. It was at this time that he gave himself totally to the work of the Master. At this time he went to school in Fincastle, Virginia for almost two years, and while there he lived with Rev. Absalom Dempsey and his family. After this he attended an academy in Albemarle County, Virginia. He then became a co-laborer of Rev. John Kerr, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia. From this field, he was called to the church at Petersburg, Virginia, and was regularly installed as the pastor. He was nineteen years old at this time. He preached to this church until 1834, during which time he baptized a large number among whom were Rev. Thomas Hume, Sr., and the distinguished Dr. J. S. Baker.

At the death of Rev. Abner Clopton, Mr. Mason was called to succeed him as pastor of some of the churches in Charlotte County. He filled this position nearly three years until he was called as pastor of Mayslick Baptist Church, Mays Lick, Kentucky, in October, 1836. He also preached to the First Baptist Church at Maysville, Kentucky; Washington Baptist Church, Washington, Kentucky, and Bracken Baptist Church, Minerva, Kentucky. About 1845, he became involved in a personal difficulty with several of the members of the different churches that he pastored. Grave reports affecting his moral character became current. A Council was called to investigate the charges. The Council met at the Lewisburg Baptist Church and decided that Mr. Mason should make an acknowledgement for his error, and ask for forgiveness for his wrongs, or that Washington Baptist Church should exclude him. He agreed at once to comply. He made the following declaration in writing:

"Not claiming to be infallible, I declare, in fulfillment of the requisition of the council, as far as I can do without a violation of conscience, that I am sorry for any errors that I have committed, and any injustice that I may have done Brother William V. Morris or Brother John L. Kirk, or any member of the Mays Lick Church, and I ask forgiveness.

Signed Gilbert Mason."

The Washington Church accepted the apology, but the Mayslick and Maysville Churches rejected it. The whole matter came before the Bracken Association in 1847, and Washington Church was excluded from the Association for not complying with the decision of the council. The result was the organization of the Washington Association which was formed within the bounds of the Bracken Association. Later the two associations were united into one as the Bracken Association.

About 1853, or the year following, Mr. Mason was called to the church at Lexington, Virginia. Remaining here for several years, he baptized a large number, among whom was the eloquent and scholarly J. C. Hiden, who later became pastor of the First Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky. From Lexington, Virginia, he was called to Manchester, Virginia where he was employed as a missionary under the General Association of Baptists. As he had done in Lexington, he continued his success in the ministry in this field. He stayed here until the beginning of the Civil War. At this time, he moved back to Kentucky where he preached until the Fall of 1872, when, his health being impaired, he resigned his charge and returned to Virginia. He resided at Lynchburg, Virginia until January, 1873. At that time, although very feeble in health, he went to visit his brother, Rev. G. M. Mason

of Yanceyville, N. C. Here he remained until his death in 1873.

Gilbert Mason was one of the most remarkable men that ever occupied a place in the American pulpit. At the age of 12 years, he could repeat whole chapters of the Bible by memory, and could readily turn to any passage in it. He was fully licensed to preach in his 13th year. At the time of his death which occurred when he was only sixty-three, he had been engaged in preaching the Gospel for fifty years, and, according to his own statement, had baptized over four thousand people.

Elder A. D. Sears, who was well-known among Baptists, preached at the Bracken Church from December 1840 until 1842 under the auspices of the Bracken Association. He was missionary for the Bracken Association. There is some dispute as to whether he pastored the church or whether he preached for the church in the capacity as Missionary for the Bracken Association. John H. Spencer in his, "A HISTORY OF KENTUCKY BAPTISTS," says, "That he was never pastor" but other sources differ with him as stating that he was pastor. Through his ministry he did much to recover Bracken Church from the Mason "controversy."

Rev. Sears was of English parentage, and was born in Fairfax County, Virginia, January 1, 1804. He acquired a fair education. He was of deistical influence, and entertained a strong prejudice against religious people, holding the Baptist in special contempt. He never formed the habit of attending preaching. In 1823 he came to Kentucky and settled in Bourbon county, where in 1825, he married Miss Ann B. Bowie. By some means, he was led to a close study of the Bible, and thereby was led to Christ. He had never heard a Baptist preach but getting hold of Andrew Fullers' works, he found their teachings so fully in accordance with his experience, and understanding of the New Testament, that he resolved to join the hitherto despised Baptists. On the 19th of July 1838, he and his wife were baptized by Dr. Ryland Thompson Dillard into the fellowship of David's Fork Baptist Church in Fayette County. In 1839, he was licensed to preach by his church. In Feb. 1840, he was ordained to the ministry at David's Fork Baptist Church by Ryland Thompson Dillard, Edward Darnaby, and Josiah Leak.

He at once entered upon the work of his holy calling, and during the next seven months, preached once a month at Georgetown Baptist Church and the Forks of the Elkhorn Baptist Church (not pastoring at either place) and devoted the rest of his time to hold protracted meetings. In December, 1840, he moved to Flemingsburg Baptist Church and resided in Flemingsburg, Kentucky. He was appointed Missionary of the Bracken Association. He preached at Flemingsburg Baptist Church (which at this time was only a few months old--having been formed from the old Wilson Run and Popular Run Churches) and Bracken Baptist Church at Minerva. He labored in the bounds of Bracken Association until 1842. During the year 1840, he held meetings at Shelbyville, Burkes's Branch and South Benson Churches where large numbers were added to the churches. In July, 1842, he began a meeting with the First Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky which continued eight weeks, and during which time he baptized one-hundred twenty-five people. The first of September in 1843, he accepted the pastorate of this church where he continued until July 1849, when he resigned to take the General Agency of the General Baptist Association of Kentucky. In July 1850, he was called as pastor of the Baptist Church at Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Here he remained until the Civil War began, when he moved to the South where he preached to the soldiers, many of whom were baptized. In the latter part of 1864, he attempted to move to Kentucky, but was prohibited by the military authorities. In Jan., 1866, he took charge of the Baptist church at Clarksville, Tennessee. Under his care the church increased from 25 members to 225 members, and erected a house of worship at a cost of \$25,000 dollars. He remained with this church until his death, June 15, 1891 at the age of 87 years.

Alexander Warren LaRue was called as pastor of the Bracken Church in 1842. He succeeded A. D. Sears. Rev. LaRue was born in what is now LaRue County, Kentucky, January 23, 1819. His paternal grandfather was John LaRue, who was of French extraction, and settled in the county which bears his name in 1785. He left the Presbyterian church and joined the Baptist Church and was a distinguished and honored citizen. His father, Squire LaRue, was assistant Circuit Judge of his district, represented Hardin County in the Kentucky Legislature in 1822, was a member of the Baptist Church, and of him, it is written, "He filled every place to which he was called, with dignity and honor." The mother of A. W. LaRue was a daughter of Alexander McDougal, who was a native of Ireland, and a faithful Baptist preacher.

A. W. LaRue was born in what is now LaRue County, January 23, 1819. He was led to Christ under the ministry of his cousin, Rev. S. L. Helm, and was baptized into the fellowship of Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, Kentucky by Rev. Coleman Lovelace, Sept. 7, 1838. He was licensed to preach Nov. 3, 1838. Having taken an academic course at Elizabethtown, he entered Georgetown College in 1839 where he graduated in 1842. Soon after graduation, he was called to the pastorate of Flemingsburg Baptist Church, Flemingsburg, Kentucky and also to the pastorate of Bracken Baptist Church at Minerva, Kentucky, and in addition, supplied two other pulpits in the Bracken Association. He was ordained at the Flemingsburg Baptist Church, December 4, 1842. In this field, he labored with great success and usefulness nearly seven years not only preaching to the charge of four churches but laboring abundantly throughout the territory of the Bracken Association. In 1849, his health, having become greatly enfeebled from excessive labor and exposure, he moved to Louisville, Kentucky, and entered into partnership with the distinguished Rev. William Calmes Buck, by which he became co-editor and part owner of the paper now so widely known as the "WESTERN RECORDER." He was connected with the Journal about four years, until 1853. Concurrently with the paper he was pastor of Banks Street Baptist Church and for a time was pastor of East Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. In January, 1853, having severed his connection with the paper, he accepted a call to the Harrodsburg Baptist Church at Harrodsburg, Kentucky. He pastored this church until the summer of 1856. Following his ministry at Harrodsburg, Kentucky, he accepted a call to the pastorate of the Georgetown Baptist Church, Georgetown, Kentucky. He remained with this church until 1859. In August, 1859, he accepted the pastorate of the Stanford Baptist Church, Stanford, Kentucky. Here he remained until the year 1863. In 1856, he moved to Christian County where he became pastor of the Salem Baptist Church. Before he had been there a year, his wife died suddenly of an attack of neuralgia of the brain. She was a daughter of Elijah Craig, Jr. and granddaughter of Rev. Lewis Craig. She was a noble and godly woman, and was the strength of her household. Rev. LaRue was frail and extremely sensitive and refined in his feeling. The shock was greater than his constitution could bear. His wife died July 19, 1864 and he followed her to the place of everlasting rest on September 11, 1864.

Mr. LaRue was not a genius, neither did he possess a superior native intellect. He was but a medium man in all of his gifts. But his application, his industry and well-tempered zeal were extraordinary. Few men were more consecrated to the cause of Christ, or made a deeper impression upon the minds and hearts of those he came in contact. His usefulness in the cause of Christ was very extensive and a multitude of Christian's hearts mourned when the beloved Mr. LaRue, great in goodness, was felled in the prime of life.

The old house of worship, built by Lewis Craig and rescued from the Campbell Movement under the ministry of A. W. LaRue, was dilapidated, so much so, that it was unfit for worship service and a new building was erected in the Village of Minerva. Since 1850 the church has continued to decline in membership. About 1900

the meeting house ceased to be occupied as a place of worship. The building was used as a community center until 1930 when the property was sold by the remaining members to a private citizen for \$280.00. The money was given to Bracken Association, with the designation that it would be used for the enclosing of the graves of Lewis Craig and his wife. On the fence is a plaque which records a brief biography of Rev. Craig's life. In October 1930, the unveiling ceremony was held with Dr. John R. Sampey as the principal speaker.

Under the capable and enthusiastic leadership of Rev. Ken Forman, Director of Missions for Bracken Association, a forceful revival surge to restore the Bracken Baptist Building and to begin again a work at this church has been launched. For many years, the old Bracken Church has been used as a tobacco barn. It is the hope of this writer that every Baptist in Kentucky will get behind Rev. Forman and give of their strength, time and talent to restore this worthy building to its former glory. It would take very little from the pockets of Baptists in Kentucky if each one would contribute at least \$5.00 to this cause. This citadel of Baptist history should, by all means, be restored and a mission should be started within its walls. Let us pray together, stay together and work together for this worthy goal.

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### *THE BAPTIST EXPERIENCE*

*IN  
CENTRAL KENTUCKY  
1781-1830*

*by Phyllis Mettingly*

Baptists were among the first explorers and settlers of the Kentucky wilderness. Daniel Boone's younger brother, Squire, who was a licensed and ordained Baptist minister, is known to have joined the skilled frontiersman on his first venture beyond the Cumberland Gap during the year 1770. Other members of the denomination were quick to follow. The influx of pioneers into Kentucky began in earnest during the year 1779 so that by 1784, twenty thousand people were estimated to reside within the boundaries of the Virginia territory.<sup>1</sup> Although the majority of these settlers were unchurched and, to say the least, irreligious, those who did adhere to Christian principles enjoyed an importance in the small frontier settlements which was far out of proportion to their actual numbers. The Baptists predominated within this religious sphere of influence because, in part, they were the most numerous of the early Christian denominations to arrive in Kentucky, and also because of their democratic form of church government which was peculiarly suited to the needs and tastes of the individualistic frontiersman. But if the Baptists were influential, they were also greatly influenced. Wilderness settlements created demands upon the denomination which strained its structure, membership, and doctrinal tenets. The period between 1781 and 1835 was a time of great fluidity and change for the Baptists in Kentucky. It is the purpose of this paper to examine Baptist development in the Bluegrass region of the state, centering upon the manner in which the Baptist faith made inroads upon the frontier as a civilizing, as well as a religious force. But the study of early Baptists in Central Kentucky would be incomplete without

an examination of those divisive issues which ultimately led to the emergence of a major new sect out of the very heart of the Baptist denomination. Finally, a review of such events is helpful, not only in understanding the development and struggles of a religious group in a frontier setting, but also in comprehending the problems of recreating an organized society in a barbaric wilderness setting.

### I. *The Founding of the Baptist Church In Central Kentucky, 1783-1805.*

The great preponderance of early Baptist pioneers who came to Kentucky were from Virginia. Of course, the majority of initial settlers were from the "Mother" state. As such Baptists were part of an amazing surge westward to find new and more abundant lands in the "Dark and Bloody Ground." But Baptists as a religious group had an additional reason for moving from Virginia. Under existing pre-Revolutionary laws all ministers of the Gospel had been required to purchase a license to preach from civil authorities. Baptists, in particular those designated as Separates, had refused to submit to secular authority over what they considered to be purely a religious question between themselves and God.<sup>2</sup>

Because of their civil disobedience Baptists would become the victims of harrassment and imprisonment. Many of the early Baptist ministers who came to Kentucky had suffered such abuse at the hands of Virginia officials. It is significant, however, that as persecution mounted against the Baptists as a religious minority, public support for the dissenters rose correspondingly. Civil authorities, fearful of a popular uprising in support of the oppressed Baptists, had begun arresting ministers as disturbers of the peace rather than as opponents to the license requirement.<sup>3</sup>

Such had been the religious situation in Virginia as the American colonies embarked upon their struggle for indepen-

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dence. During the Revolutionary War Baptists would press unceasingly for a toleration act to be passed by the Virginia legislature. Their purpose was two-fold: first; to abolish the civil licensing of ministers and secondly, to ensure the total separation of church and state. Ultimately they would be successful in achieving both. Aided by such prominent Revolutionary leaders as Patrick Henry, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson, the Baptists united with other evangelical sects to snatch authority from the hands of the Anglican clergy. The final death blow to religious discrimination in Virginia came from the pen of Jefferson and became law in 1786 as the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom. In the movement for widening religious boundaries the Baptists played a prominent, often crucial, role.<sup>4</sup>

During the Revolutionary War exploration into the Kentucky wilderness continued without serious interruption. Despite the increase in religious toleration within Virginia, Baptists also would increasingly look with longing toward the western country. As with most settlers, the prevailing desire on the part of prospective Baptist pioneers was for land. Socially and economically, most Virginia Baptists of the Revolutionary period would have fit into the category of a largely uneducated, lower income farming class. Ministers of the sect were no different. Men like William Hickman and Lewis Craig were lay preachers who were required to toil six days a week in their own fields in order to support their families. The lure of Kentucky's abundant land was no less appealing to the Baptist shepherds than to their flocks. Indeed, several Baptist preachers led the way in the exploration of the Virginia wilderness.

It is most certain that Squire Boone was the first Baptist preacher to set

foot in Kentucky, but the issue as to who was the first Baptist minister to preach a sermon within the Virginia territory has long been subject to debate within the Kentucky Baptist community. William Hickman was long thought to have preached the first sermon in Harrodsburg (then Harrodstown) in 1776, but his autobiography disputes this fact, giving Thomas Tinsley, another Baptist minister,<sup>5</sup> credit for that initiative. Nevertheless Hickman was one of the very first Baptist lay-preachers to explore Kentucky as a possible homeland. His reaction to the wilderness surrounding the Harrodsburg settlement clearly reveals this particular Baptist pioneer's great desire for fertile acreage:

Here we discovered a wonder, when we came to the beauty of the country. I thought of the Queen of Sheba who came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and she said the half had not been told, so I thought of Kentucky. I thought if I could only get ten acres of land I would move to it.<sup>6</sup>

Although Hickman would not move to Kentucky until 1784 his early exploration of that wilderness and the subsequent attraction which it held for him are clear evidences of a frontiersman's spirit.

The largest migration of Virginia Baptists to the frontier occurred in 1781 under the strong and capable leadership of the Reverend Lewis Craig and the military commander, Captain William Ellis. This exodus, which became known as "The Travelling Church," is significant for several reasons: first, the move, begun in September, 1781, was made as a united religious body without a single interruption in church policy or procedure. Indeed, the members of the Upper Spotsylvania Baptist Church of Christ who remained behind were so few in number that the Virginia Church, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist.

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Secondly, the expedition was the largest ever to undertake the hazardous journey across the mountains to Kentucky. Nearly six hundred people united to make the trek. Of this group only two hundred were connected with the Spottsylvania church, the rest being allowed to travel under the protection provided by the military escort headed by Ellis. Despite the Baptists' minority in numbers, however, their superior organization and leadership kept control within the hands of Craig and Ellis throughout the length of the trip.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the congregation of "The Travelling Church" is an essential element in tracing Baptist beginnings in central Kentucky. In December, 1781, Craig halted his group near what is today the town of Lancaster, and erected Craig's Station on Gilbert's Creek. Captain Ellis crossed the Kentucky River to scout out a likely area for final settlement in the fertile Bluegrass region. Less than two years later, in the fall of 1783, the Baptist preacher and the great majority of his congregation moved to the shores of the south branch of the Elkhorn Creek, approximately five miles from the village of Lexington. One of the first orders of business upon arrival was to reconstitute the church under a new name, the South Elkhorn Baptist Church of Christ. This church became the first organized worshipping congregation of any type north of the Kentucky River. As such, South Elkhorn, her people, and her pastor, provided the genesis for Baptist growth in the central Kentucky region.<sup>8</sup>

As the Elkhorn settlers began to move out from the area of first settlement, and as new pioneers came into the region, the need for more churches quickly became apparent. John Taylor, a Virginia Baptist preacher who came to South Elkhorn soon after the church had been constituted, provides an excellent record of Baptist expansion in his pamphlet, A History of Ten Baptist Churches. Taylor settled with his wife, children,

and slaves near Craig's Station (erected by Lewis' older brother, John) on Clear Creek in Woodford County. Although South Elkhorn was nearly ten miles distance from the Clear Creek Outpost, Taylor and his family became members, as did others from the new settlement, simply because no closer church was available. The need for another constituted body of worshippers on Clear Creek soon became apparent to the congregation at South Elkhorn. Accordingly, Lewis Craig, along with seven or eight other "helps" arrived in April, 1785, to aid in the formation of the Clear Creek Baptist Church of Christ. The first order of business was to develop a constitution of beliefs with which the thirty subscribing members could agree. After each member had affixed his or her signature to the agreement and the "helps" had signalled their approval, the very practical problem of picking a suitable pastor presented itself. This procedure was guided by Lewis Craig. Taylor writes that the members of Clear Creek had all secretly hoped Craig would consent to divide his time between Elkhorn and their small new church. But the outcome of the meeting was far different as Taylor relates in the following passage:

His mode was to ask every member of the church, male or female, bond or free, who do you choose as your pastor...I must confess it filled me with surprise, when the first man that was asked answered that he chose me; and my astonishment continued to increase, until the question went all around, only one man objected, but Lewis Craig soon worked him out of his objection, for it lay in thinking my coat was too fine. For my own part, I did think that no man in the church had the mind of Christ but this one objector, though the objection about my coat, I considered trivial, yet to me, it seemed as if the Lord directed it.<sup>9</sup>

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*John Taylor reluctantly agreed to take over the pastoral care of Clear Creek. His hesitation, however, in accepting such leadership did not adversely affect his efforts as minister. A local revival developed almost immediately under the influence of his preaching which greatly swelled the ranks of the church's membership. Taylor was pastor at Clear Creek for eleven years. When he left, the church had multiplied ten times over the membership of thirty which had elected him its pastor.<sup>10</sup>*

*The third Baptist Church constituted in the Bluegrass region was that of the Great Crossings, or Big Crossings, congregation in what is today Scott County. The dates of constitution were May 28 and 29, 1785, barely a month after the formation of the Clear Creek Church. The Craigs also assumed the dominant role in this frontier church's organization. Lewis Craig once again represented South Elkhorn while his brother, Elijah, who had arrived in Kentucky during the past winter and had settled in the Georgetown region, was chosen by the members as its first pastor.*

*Two other churches rapidly followed, both being influenced in some way by the thriving mother church at Elkhorn. Bryan's Station was constituted in March, 1786, with helps from South Elkhorn and Great Crossings. For its first pastor, the Bryan's Church chose Ambrose Dudley, a Virginian who had been among the Baptist population of "The Travelling Church" and who had been a charter member of South Elkhorn.*

*The East Hickman Church, originally constituted as the Marble Creek Baptist Church of Christ, became a worshipping congregation in June, 1787. As with her other daughters, the early records of the Hickman church reveal a close tie to South Elkhorn, and clearly illustrate just how vital the strong pioneer congregation pastored by Lewis Craig was to the growing influence of Baptists in Central Kentucky.<sup>11</sup>*

*Increases in the number and size of churches created the need for a means of uniting the congregations into some type of duly approved fellowship. Virginia Baptists, of course, had prided themselves on their local autonomy, with ultimate authority for each church resting, not upon an ecclesiastical hierarchy, but rather upon the majority voice of each individual congregation. Nevertheless, Baptists had also recognized the need for a minimum degree of interaction between churches in order that certain basic doctrinal principles might be supported by all. Thus, the association had been created to provide an avenue of communication for Baptist pastors and laymen. Central Kentucky Baptists, led by Lewis Craig and John Taylor, followed this example in June, 1785, when they attempted to secure a union of sorts with the Separate Baptist churches, chiefly located south of the Kentucky River. This attempt failed because the Separate Baptists, who opposed adherence to creeds, were voted down by the more numerous Regular Baptists in a decision which accepted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith as the chief written statement of doctrinal beliefs.<sup>12</sup>*

*The Elkhorn Association of Regular Baptists was the second attempt at uniting a group of churches. Unlike the first effort, it was successful. This Association, the first west of the Allegheny Mountains, was organized at Clear Creek meeting house in Oct., 1785, by the following six churches: South Elkhorn, Clear Creek, Great Crossings, Gilbert's Creek, Tates Creek, and Limestone. William Hickman, newly arrived in Kentucky, preached the introductory sermon for that first session while William Cave, a brother-in-law to Lewis Craig, was elected its moderator. The Association would meet annually in August, garnering added support during each session.*

*In viewing the formative years of*

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a frontier area it is sometimes difficult to delineate specific events which exerted a critical influence on the development of that region. With the Baptist pioneers, however, the crucial period is easily designated. The two-year period from 1800 to 1802 saw a dramatic evangelistic revival sweep the Kentucky frontier. That the Baptist Denomination prospered from this surge in religious ardor, there can be no doubt. South Elkhorn, under the leadership of her new pastor, John Shackleford (Lewis Craig had moved to Mason County), added 309 converts in the year 1801; Clear Creek's membership topped 500 during the same period.<sup>13</sup>

Even more extraordinary, however, was the vast proliferation of churches that appeared as a direct result of the "Great Revival." Glen's Creek Church in Woodford County was constituted in May, 1801, by converts of a series of revivals occurring at the Clear Creek Church. Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, located in Jessamine County, was "gathered together" in the same year by members of South Elkhorn who resided in the Mount Pleasant area. In addition, David's Fork, a daughter church of the Bryan's congregation, officially separated from the older membership in 1801, although the Bryan's pastor, Ambrose Dudley, continued to serve as pastor for both groups for several years.<sup>14</sup>

The greatest example of growth during the Great Revival was then emanating from the Great Crossings church in Scott County. The revival began in May, 1800, after a six-year stagnation in membership. In that year 175 individuals were added to the church roles while 186 additions were noted in 1801. This increase also gave impetus to the creation of three new churches in 1801: the Dry Run Church, Mountain Island on Eagle Creek, and North Elkhorn. Four years later the Long Lick congregation was constituted, a delayed but still viable product of the Revival of 1800-1801.<sup>15</sup>

The impact of the Great Revival upon Kentucky Baptists cannot be underestimated. The most obvious result was a drastic increase in membership and a corresponding rise in the number of Baptist churches. Closely related to this development was the growth of Elkhorn Association. The initial purpose of the Associations's organizers was to provide a unifying force among the various churches. This aim became even more desirable as churches grew and spread.

But the Great Revival also exerted an adverse effect upon frontier Baptist organizations. A great percentage of the converts lost their religious zeal almost as quickly as it had been gained, and relatively few ever entered fully into the mainstream of church life. In a sense, then, the Great Revival allowed a vast number of dubious individuals to weaken the fibre of churches which had theretofore been the preserve of dedicated Baptists. The increase in membership also diluted, to an amazing degree, the foundation of doctrinal unity which most Baptist leaders had sought to preserve. Individuals swept up in the emotional fervor of the revival movement did not take time to rationally analyze the doctrines of the faith with which they intended to commune. As a result, many people, even those who were sincere in their conversion experience, found reasons to oppose ideas generally held as sacred by Baptist believers. Thus, the seeds of dissension were sown during the period of greatest expansion for Baptists. When viewed in this manner, the Great Revival assumes importance as a touchstone which separates the period of Baptist expansion into the Kentucky frontier from the more complex era of Baptist maturation.

### II. The Operation of Early Baptist Churches in Central Kentucky.

Baptist Churches in central Ken-

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tucky exhibited common practices in governing their individual memberships. First and foremost, every Kentucky fellowship was organized along truly democratic principles. Almost without exception those church records which are still extant reveal that every member was allowed to express opinions and to vote on all subjects. The exceptions to this rule were, of course, the slave members.

Another procedure practiced in common by Kentucky Baptist Churches was that of the discipline of wayward members. Individuals were subject to strict scrutiny by both their pastor and by others of their fellowship.

The most frequent form of offense reported in church records was non-attendance at business meetings and worship services. Other typical forms of misbehavior included gossiping, harboring ill-feelings toward another member, and lying.

A member accused of an offense was cited to appear before the next business session. If the individual failed to appear at the appointed session or if a suitably reply to the charge could not be given, the member was often excluded from the fellowship of the church.

The early Baptist Church in Kentucky opposed any possible encroachments upon its religious autonomy by secular authorities. Ironically, however, the frontier denomination judged and censured its members on matters which could only be considered within the civil province. Drunkenness, public brawling, and dueling, were constant charges dealt with in church business sessions. Occasionally, members who neglected to pay their debts were taken to task by the congregation.

Discipline of slave members was a constant concern. Recalcitrant black members were often dealt with at the request of their masters. Slave offenses such as stealing, lying, fornication, were common entries in church record books.

Nevertheless, a careful study of Baptist business proceedings reveals a marked tendency to treat disobedience or indifferent slave members with more indulgence than was normally afforded to white members. Implicit in such treatment was a recognition of the slave's cultural and moral deficiencies as a result of his enforced servitude.<sup>16</sup>

### III. Divisive Issues Among Kentucky Baptists 1805-1825

The period 1805-1825 was a time of conflicting doctrinal interpretations for Kentucky Baptists. An examination of such disagreements will shed light not only upon the peculiar problems of those people calling themselves Baptists, but will also illuminate issues which had a definite impact upon the state in general.

The nature of the Trinity was a theological issue which was often hotly debated, particularly after the Great Revival. The question appears frequently in church records and in the Associational minutes. At the 1803 session of the Elkhorn Association, meeting with the Town-Fork Baptist Church, the Cooper's Run Baptist Church was excluded for denying the divine nature of the Trinity. The same meeting also adjudged that portion of the Flat Lick Church which adhered to a belief in the Trinity to be the true representative of that fellowship within the association.<sup>17</sup> Consistently, the great majority of churches which were delegates to the Elkhorn body refused to question the spiritual mysteries inherent in a consideration of the "Three-In One."

Other issues could not be so quickly and unanimously agreed upon. At one point, questions concerning the morality of slavery threatened to rip the fellowship apart. Following in the wake of the revival movement, several Baptist leaders began to doubt

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the humanity of holding slaves. Most prominent among these men was David Barrow, a Virginia minister who had long sought the emancipation of blacks. In a diary kept during an early visit to Kentucky in 1795, Barrow constantly referred to his firm conviction that slavery was a heinous sin for which God would hold his white servants accountable. Although Barrow did not settle within the boundaries of the Elkhorn Association, his opinions generated great excitement among central Kentucky churches. The long-smouldering dispute flared to a fever pitch in the two-year period from 1805 to 1807. A decision of the Elkhorn Association of August, 1805, reflected the majority opinion that,

The Association judges it improper for ministers, churches or associations, to meddle with emancipation from slavery, or any other political subject; and as such we advise ministers and churches to have nothing to do therewith in their religious capacities.<sup>18</sup>

The issue continued in 1807 with two queries related to the emancipation dispute being brought before the Elkhorn body. One was directed against Carter Tarrant, an associate of Barrow's who was censured for preaching his abolitionist viewpoints from the pulpit. In addition the association advised its members to refuse a letter of dismission to those who might wish to join an emancipating church on the grounds that it was disorderly for a Baptist Church to dismiss any member to join a congregation with which they were not in fellowship.<sup>19</sup>

The emancipating churches referred to above were formed by Baptists who held to the ideals of Barrow and Tarrant. In 1807 these bodies joined together to form the "Friends of Humanity Emancipating Association." An example of such a body was the Gilgal Church which included disaffected members from the Clear Creek, Glen's Creek, and Hillsborough churches in Woodford County.

Even the venerable William Hickman, then pastor of the Forks of Elkhorn Church near the Woodford--Franklin county lines, sought dismission from his duties and pastor and member during 1807, in order that he might join the Emancipating Association. By November 1809, Hickman was back before the church he would serve for more than forty years, asking for his reinstatement into the membership. What happened to Hickman during that two-year period is unknown, but it is safe to assume that his efforts as an Emancipating Baptist proved less rewarding and satisfying than he had hoped.

The Friends of Humanity Association never attracted large numbers of followers nor were the members which subscribed to its anti-slavery tenets capable of concerted and unified action. A moral crusade against slavery in a young and growing Kentucky required a degree of unanimity which the Friends of Humanity never possessed. Thus, emancipation ceased to be a troublesome issue for Kentucky Baptists soon after the War of 1812, and by 1820, the associations's dedication to emancipation had ceased to exist.<sup>20</sup>

Ironically, however, the event which led to the first great split within the ranks of Elkhorn Association was the result of a financial disagreement. Jacob Creath, Sr. and Thomas Lewis, both members of the Town-fork Baptist Church, entered upon an agreement whereby Lewis allowed Creath to purchase a slave from him on the promise of later payment. Unfortunately, Lewis died before the debt could be settled. For reasons which are not totally clear from the evidence available, Creath refused to pay the money he owed Lewis to the dead man's heirs. This set off a debate which soon raged throughout the Association. A pamphlet written by Elijah Craig, disparaging Creath's character and questioning his suitability as a minister only served to fan the flames. The Town-fork Church attempted to settle

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the issue in July, 1807, by calling for helps from the Association's churches. Eighteen responded. A committee of these representatives duly acquitted Jacob Creath of the charges levelled against him in Craig's article.<sup>21</sup>

But the problem was not settled. Indeed, the disagreement somehow transcended the question of Creath's indebtedness and became a full-bloom doctrinal issue. A careful search of associational records reveals little as to the exact nature of this larger quarrel, but the ultimate outcome provides a clue. Led by Ambrose Dudley, the group which had sided against Creath left the Elkhorn Association in 1809. Despite repeated pleas from the older fellowship, the new group refused to be reconciled with their Baptist brethren and in 1810, at a meeting held at Bryan's, constituted themselves as "The Licking Association of Particular Baptists." The key to understanding the underlying cause of this drastic split can be found in the designation "Particular" Baptists. From the Elkhorn Association Minutes it is possible to determine that the disaffected group felt that the Creath issue had been handled in a prejudicial manner, and that the triumph for such bias had been possible because of the incorrect views inherent in the creed of the Association itself. As such the departure of these Baptists from the Elkhorn Association reflected a desire to abolish all creeds and constitutions, a belief quite similar in nature to that of the earlier Separate Baptists and, ironically, a foreshadowing of a still larger controversy in which Jacob Creath, Sr. would once again play an important role, but in a much different context than as an issue.

This large split which occurred in the chief Baptist association of central Kentucky was striking proof that the denomination could not emerge unscathed from bitterness over doctrinal matters. Even more specifically, the formation of a Particular Baptist association was

but a foreshadowing of an even greater anti-creed movement--that of Alexander Campbell and the Disciples of Christ.

In a sense Kentucky Baptists provided the mental framework necessary for the growth of Campbell's religious philosophy by their response to the related questions of missions support and an educated clergy. The peculiar demands created by a frontier setting on a religious group and its leaders were dealt with successfully by the Baptists. It has already been noted that a large percentage of the denominations's clergy were called directly from the ranks of the people. As such, ministers were at once largely uneducated in the processes of theological reasoning, and at the same time were ideally suited for the spiritual leadership of a frontier population suspicious of college degrees and appeals to intellectual reasoning. A notable exception to this wilderness rule-of-thumb was the Reverend John Gano. Gano, unlike the majority of Kentucky Baptist ministers, was a formally-trained theologian who came to Kentucky in 1787. Almost immediately rising to prominence as a Baptist leader on the frontier, Gano appears to have been able to use his superior training in a conciliatory manner which did not offend his uneducated brethren. The 1804 session of the Elkhorn Association paid tribute to Gano, who had died in the previous year, noting his skillful guidance as moderator for a period of ten consecutive years. The fellowship entered this accolade into their official minutes, "He lived and died, an ornament to religion."<sup>23</sup>

If the Baptist frontiersman typically distrusted a learned minister, they were adamant in their contempt for a pastor who needed financial support from his congregation. This does not mean that Baptist churches never aided their leaders, but it does indicate a common assumption that any preacher genuinely called by God would also be

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given the strength to provide for his physical needs. Significantly, frontier Baptist ministers also sought to promote the idea of a financially independent clergy. Their reasoning for such a policy can be found in the favoritism given the established Anglican church in Virginia and the professional status of its ministers. To summarize, then:

...many western Baptists argued that it was sinful to try to educate a man called by God since He never called an unprepared person.. The local churches wished to retain their right freely to call and ordain men congenial to their tastes from their own ranks, a reflection of their original sectarian heritage.<sup>24</sup>

These varied prejudices came to the forefront in what is commonly termed the anti-missionism movement. In central Kentucky this crusade was led by the redoubtable John Taylor who argued fiercely against the creation and support of anything resembling missionary boards, societies, or theological schools. In his pamphlet, Thoughts on Missions, which appeared in 1820, the sixty-seven year old Taylor directed his most scathing attacks toward the missionary solicitor Luther Rice. Referring to a speech which Rice made before the 1815 Elkhorn Association session, Taylor remarked, "He spoke some handsome things about the Kingdom of Christ; but every stroke he gave seemed to mean money."<sup>25</sup>

Taylor's remarks concerning Rice and other Baptist missionaries reveal a tinge of jealousy, intermingled with some bitterness, at the contention promulgated by the Baptist Mission Board that paid evangelists should be sent to the Western frontier. The pioneer minister caustically reminded the over-eager missionaries that pastors chosen by the people were already performing the work which they would begin, and without being subsidized for their efforts.

Taylor's accusations seem small and narrowminded in the light of historical hindsight, but their impact should not be underestimated. From the records of the Elkhorn Association it becomes obvious that the issue created divisive elements within the fellowship.<sup>26</sup> Although another split did not occur within the ranks of the Association due to the mission controversy, the effect of such a disagreement created restless factions within the Baptist ranks which needed only a larger controversy to once again erupt into open conflict.

### IV. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL And The Fatal Split: 1825-1830

Kentucky Baptists faced the greatest challenge to their unity in the form of an individual, Alexander Campbell. It is significant that Campbell, himself, was initially a Baptist who became disenchanted with what he considered to be the unnecessary creeds and confessions of faith subscribed to by the denomination. Far from intending to effect a split within the ranks of Baptists, Campbell and his adherents repeatedly tried to persuade others of the desirability of change, styling themselves as "Baptist Reformers." As Fortune points out in his study of The Disciples in Kentucky:

In Studying the separation it should be borne in mind that those who insisted on reforms were Baptists, and so regarded themselves. Most of them had been brought up in the Baptist Church, and all their training and association had been Baptist. They believed that they were the true Baptists. Instead of feeling that they should get out of the church of their fathers, the church in which they had been nurtured, they believed it was their mission to remain in this church and help to make it like the Church of the New Testament.<sup>27</sup>

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Campbell swiftly gained adherents among central Kentucky Baptists who were persuaded by the reformer's plea for doctrinal simplicity. The old frontier debate centering around the Baptist Confession of Faith was revived. In addition Campbell adopted an opposition to missions which garnered support from Baptists who had frowned on aid to missionaries. John Taylor, however, was not one of these converts. Disliking Campbell as much as he had mistrusted Rice, Taylor would once again take pen in hand to attack what he considered to be a dangerous schism.<sup>28</sup>

Other Baptist ministers, however, were not so suspicious of Campbell's motives, and quickly became ardent supporters of his viewpoints. Men like Jacob Creath, Sr.; his nephew, Jacob, Jr.; James Fishback of First Baptist, Lexington; John Shackleford of South Elkhorn, and J. T. Johnson, threw their wholehearted support behind Campbell.

Controversy reached into the heart of Elkhorn churches. The first recorded trouble occurred in Woodford County between the Clear Creek congregation and a disaffected minority which had chosen Jacob Creath, Jr. as its pastor. The younger Creath had already been charged with heresy in 1829 by the Great Crossings congregation. At the hearing, Creath defended himself in his assertion that the Word of God and not the Holy Spirit was the agent for sinful man's regeneration. J. T. Johnson, a member of the congregation, was so impressed by Creath's assertions that he was subsequently won over to Campbellite views. Although Creath had been acquitted of the charge, suspicion of his doctrinal motives became prevalent among the more orthodox ministers of the association.<sup>29</sup>

The Clear Creek controversy ultimately resolved itself when the minority withdrew and joined the Big Spring congregation in Versailles which was under the pastoral care of Jacob Creath, Sr. The Big Spring church was also

in the throes of a similar debate, but the outcome would be different. After using the church jointly for a short period of time, the Baptists, this time in the minority, withdrew, leaving the building to the group which had by now taken the denominational name of Disciples of Christ or Christians.<sup>30</sup>

In 1830 Elkhorn Association became hopelessly divided by the Campbellite controversy. The oldest congregation in the fellowship, South Elkhorn, was excluded by the Association in a move which also saw the division of the largest church in the body, the First Baptist Church of Lexington. Withdrawing from the predominantly orthodox congregation, Reverend James Fishback and his supporters constituted a Christian Church on the corner of Mill and High streets in Lexington.<sup>31</sup> For all practical purposes the exclusion of these churches ended the Campbellite debates within the ranks of Baptist churches. Those who could not remain Baptist now had an avenue of exit and were able to leave without causing further division.

### V. Conclusions

The early Baptist experience in Kentucky provides the historian with a glimpse not only into the religious convictions of a select group of pioneers, but also into the overall frontier experience. Notwithstanding their peculiarly avid spiritual beliefs, Baptist settlers were truly representative of their situation. Obviously, Baptists as individuals were not immune to the dangers of the Kentucky wilderness. What is not so clear is that the denomination also faced challenges to its existence and developed an organizational structure indicative of those stresses.

The Baptist denomination in frontier Kentucky was an organized body in an unorganized setting. As such it early filled a void created

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by the absence of restraints normally provided in a structured society. The degree of discipline provided by a Baptist congregation over its members, although seemingly excessive, provided a necessary and even desirable method of controlling individualistic frontiersmen.

On the other hand, frontier Baptists are also representative of the democratic spirit prevalent in early Kentucky. The methods and procedures used to govern Baptist congregations allowed participation by all members. Even more significant was the fact that each church body exercised control over its own group. No hierarchical authority was tolerated by Baptists, and this is undoubtedly the reason why Baptists had such a vast appeal for the independent frontiersman.

Baptist leadership also reflected the influence which frontier conditions exerted upon the individual. Men like Lewis Craig, John Taylor, and William Hickman were lay pastors, at once above and yet still part of their congregations. Pastors were held responsible for their actions and could not avoid the scrutiny of their members any more than the congregation could escape the review of the minister. As such, Baptist preachers were subject to a control which prevented any form of religious hierarchy from making an appearance.

Dissension within Kentucky Baptist churches also reflected frontier influences. Moral issues such as slavery were unsettled in the pioneer mind and the church structure provided a helpful sounding board for debate over such disputatious issues. Such conflicts appeared to increase within the denomination after the Revival of 1800-1802. Due to an influx of new members who had been unprepared at the time of their conversion experience to carefully examine doctrinal tenets, the Baptist fold became an arena of division on varied issues, reflecting the unstable theology

of many of the newer converts.

The 1830 split in the Elkhorn Association marked a change in direction for central Kentucky Baptists. Baptists, although terribly divided by the introduction of Campbellite viewpoints, weathered the religious storm with doctrinal principles generally intact. Those "Baptist Reformers" who could not be satisfied with the status quo left the denomination and joined the Disciples movement. Their intention to alter the nature of Baptist beliefs failed in its chief objectives. Elkhorn Association survived the defections and exclusions, emerging from the dispute outwardly weakened, but, in reality, intrinsically much stronger than before. For the first time since the Great Revival of 1800-1801 those Kentuckians calling themselves Baptists were sure of their denomination's principles and were consistently dedicated to them. Although this unanimity of opinion would not be permanent, it marked a decisive conclusion to the frontier instability which had marred the denomination's progress for a period extending to almost fifty years.

<sup>1</sup>

William Warren Sweet, Religion On The American Frontier: The Baptists, 1783-1830 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1931), p. 24

<sup>2</sup>

Charles F. James, Struggle For Religious Liberty in Virginia (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. P. Bell Company, 1900). p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>

Sweet, p. 13

<sup>4</sup>

Ibid., p. 16

<sup>5</sup>

William Hickman, A short Account Of My Life And Travels For More Than Fifty Years: A Professed Servant of Jesus Christ (xerox copy of original manuscript is available at the Kentucky Historical Society). pp. 8-9.

<sup>6</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>

George W. Ranck, The Travelling Church: An Account of the Baptist

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Exodus From Virginia To Kentucky in 1781 Under the Leadership of Reverend Lewis Craig and Captain William Ellis (n.p., 1910), p. 13; Lewis N. Thompson, Lewis Craig: The Pioneer Baptist Preacher (Louisville, Kentucky: Baptist World Publishing Company, Inc., 1910) p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ranck, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> John Taylor, A History of Ten Baptist Churches of Which The Author Has been Alternately A Member: In Which Will be Seen Something of A Journal of The Author's Life, For More Than Fifty Years (Frankfort, Kentucky: J. H. Holeman, 1823), pp. 55-57.

<sup>10</sup> Dorothy Brown Thompson, "John Taylor Of The Ten Churches," The Register of The Kentucky Historical Society (hereafter The Register), 46, No. 156 (July, 1948), 555.

<sup>11</sup> Leland Winfield Meyer, ed., "Great Crossings Church Records: 1795-1801, "The Register, 34, No. 106 (January, 1936), 3-21; J. N. Bradley, History Of Great Crossings Church: Part I---1785-1876 (1876; rpt. Georgetown, Kentucky: by Great Crossings Baptist Church, 1945). pp. 7-10; Bryan's Station Church Book, Typescript (hereafter TS) available at the Kentucky Historical Society, n. pag.

<sup>12</sup> Taylor, pp. 50-51. It should be noted that Baptists such as Craig, Taylor and others had also designated themselves as Separate Baptists while they were in Virginia. For some reason the majority of Separate Baptists who came to Kentucky thereafter took the denomination of Regular Baptists. No explanation for this change is to be found although several authors on the subject have noted the existence of such a switch. For corroboration, see Sweet, p. 22.

It is this researcher's own personal contention, although no concrete evidence supports it, that once the Baptists removed to Kentucky, the hateful restrictions of an organized Virginia began to look more appealing in the face of

frontier disorganization. Thus, the written creeds and confessions of faith came to be accepted as a necessary part of a church's organization.

<sup>13</sup> Frank M. Masters, A History of Baptists in Kentucky (Louisville, Kentucky: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 1953). p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> "Glen's Creek Baptist Church Record Book," manuscript (hereafter MS) available at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Library; W. J. M'Glothlin, "The Baptist Church of Christ On Glen's Creek, TS available at the Kentucky Historical Society, pp. 4-5; "Mount Pleasant Baptist Church Record Book: 1801-1867," on microfilm at the University of Kentucky M. I. King Library, Special Collections Department: A Brief History of David's Fork Baptist Church (Louisville, Kentucky: Press of the Western Recorder, 1876), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Meyer, pp. 3-4; Bradley, p. 15; "Long Lick Baptist Church Book: 1805-1954," on microfilm at the University of Kentucky M. I. King Library, Special Collections Department.

<sup>16</sup> Specific examples of exclusions are in the citations noted below: East Hickman Baptist Church Book, TS, entry for 9 May, 1801; Meyer, "Great Crossings Church Records." entry for September, 1796; "Mount Freedom Church Book," MS in possession of the church, entry for September, 1832.

<sup>17</sup> "Minutes Of The Elkhorn Association of Baptists," (MSS available at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), entry for August, 1803.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., August, 1805.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., August, 1807.

<sup>20</sup> "Glen's Creek Baptist Church Records," MS entry for September 1807; M'Glothlin, pp. 7-8; W. P. Harvey, "A Sketch of the Life and Times of William Hickman," a speech delivered before the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 22 June, 1909, Ashland, Kentucky (Louisville, Kentucky: Baptist World Publishing Company, 1909).

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<sup>21</sup> James Fishback, A Defence of The Elkhorn Association in Sixteen Letters: Addressed to Elder Henry Toler In Response To His Publication Entitled, "Union---No Union" (Lexington, Kentucky: Thomas T. Skillman, printer, 1822) p. 30.

<sup>22</sup> "Minutes of The Elkhorn Association," August, 1809, and August, 1810.

<sup>23</sup> Biographical Memoirs of The Late Reverend John Gano [written principally by himself] (New York: Southwick & Hardcastle, 1806), N. pag.

<sup>24</sup> T. Scott Miyakawa, Protestants and Pioneers: Individualism And Conformity On The American Frontier (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1964) p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> John Taylor, Thoughts on Missions (n. p., 1820), p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> "Minutes of The Elkhorn Association," August, 1820. A committee appointed during this session to discuss the missions issue included Jacob Creath, Sr., James Suggett, James Fishback, Thomas Henderson, and James Johnson. The committee reported in favor of continuing a correspondence with the Missionary Board.

In the 1821 session, however, the Association reversed this decision in the following statement: "Whereas there is a respectable minority of the churches of this Association opposed to the continuance of the correspondence with the Foreign Board of Missions; whereupon, Resolved, that for the sake of peace it is expedient to discontinue the correspondence which has produced some difficulty in the minds of many of our brethren." The effect of Taylor's Thoughts On Missions, published in 1820, should not be disregarded when considering the causes for this switch in policy.

<sup>27</sup> Alonzo Williard Fortune, The Disciples in Kentucky (Lexington, Kentucky: The Convention of the Christian Churches In Kentucky, 1932), p. 80.

<sup>28</sup> John Taylor, History of Clear Creek

And Campbellism Exposed (Frankfort, Kentucky: A. G. Hodges; printer, 1830).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 13; P. Donan, Memoir Of Jacob Creath, Jr. (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll and Company, 1872), p. 78; John Rogers, Biography Of Elder J. T. Johnson (Cincinnati: n.p., 1861), p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> "Baptist Meeting House To Be Restored," Lexington Herald-Leader. 20 September, 1970, p. 49; Mattie L. Berry, A Sketch of The Christian Church At Versailles, Kentucky (Versailles, Kentucky: The Woodford Sun Company, 1930), pp. 6-8.

<sup>31</sup> "Historic Kentucky: Hill Street Christian Church, Lexington," Lexington Herald-Leader, 17 February, 1963, n. pag.

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### CHURCH ANNIVERSARIES

This is the anniversary year for a number of churches. Churches observing their 200th anniversary are Sevrens Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown; First Cedar Creek Baptist Church in Nelson County, and Gilbert's Creek Baptist Church, near Stanford in Lincoln County.

Other churches having their 100th anniversary this year, possibly with special celebrations are:

CHURCH	ASSOCIATION
Corinth	Ohio River
Cave Springs	Ohio River
Bradfordville	Central
New Hope	Greenup
Edmonton	Liberty
South Fork	Liberty
Lakeview	Little Bethel
Hopewell	Mercer
Gamaliel	Monroe
White Oak Missionary	Mt. Zion
First, Lebanon Junction	Nelson
Middleton	Simpson
Pleasant Hill	South District
Bardwell	West Kentucky
Sparta	Owen County

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### HISTORICAL COMMISSION AND SOCIETY MEETINGS

Annual Meeting - 1982  
Deer Park Baptist Church  
Louisville, Kentucky

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Annual Meeting - 1983  
First Baptist Church  
Williamsburg, Kentucky

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE



MEMOIRS

Roy E. Boatwright

Part I

I was born May 19, 1911 in a farm home eight miles north of Stanberry, Gentry County, Missouri. I was the second of six children born to William Edward and Maude Boatwright. My brother and sisters are: Evie Catts; Gerald; Vivian Davidson; Juanda Schaffer, and Eloree Baldwin.

Soon after my birth my parents moved to a farm four miles east of Stanberry. There my mother and father reared all six of their children and a cousin, Dave Boatwright. Even though times were hard and my father was a renter, all the Boatwrights were well cared for. All the children graduated from the Stansberry High School and one by one left the farm to become engaged in various vocations. We were blessed by great, loving and hard-working parents. I cannot conceive of any children with more loving parents. Father was born July 29, 1881 and died September 12, 1966. Mother was born June 12, 1883 and died September 29, 1962. At the time of their death they were members of the First Baptist Church, Stanberry, Missouri.

The Boatwright family has always been a very closely knit family. Love, kindness, harmony and concern have been

characteristics of the entire family. I could not have had a finer brother and sisters. At this time I shall leave the fuller story of my brother and sisters perhaps to take up at a later time.

I became a Christian at the age of fifteen. I made my profession of faith during a revival meeting at Alanthus, Missouri. During that revival I was visiting my mother's brother, Ora Jennings who lived at Alanthus. We attended the revival every night. My Uncle Ora made his profession of faith at the same time. I was baptized into the fellowship of the Alanthus Church. However, shortly thereafter, I moved my membership to the Long Branch Baptist Church, Darlington, Missouri. When I was sixteen years of age and a junior in high school I surrendered to preach. I was licensed by the Long Branch Baptist Church in 1928 at the age of seventeen. On the fifth Sunday in June, 1930, at the age of nineteen I was ordained by the same church. Rev. Link Groom was pastor of the Long Branch Church at that time. I well remember the text of my first sermon. It was Luke 9:57 f. It was not much of a sermon but a gallant try. The prayers and encouragements of the saints of the church helped me in my firm commitment to my calling.

At the time of my call to preach I only had a New Testament. Soon thereafter I was asked by Rev. Oldham, pastor of the First Baptist Church, to supply his pulpit while he was away. For my effort he presented to me my first Bible. At the time of my ordination my library was well equipped with a Bible, a Bible story book, a dictionary and the Articles of Faith.

Upon graduating from high school I enrolled in Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Missouri. I was there only a short time and returned home and worked on my father's farm and preached in rural churches. The next year I enrolled again in the same college.

August 15, 1931 I was married to

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

Goldie Mae Chenoweth of Darlington, Missouri. We were members of the Long Branch Baptist Church. So, when I went back to college she went with me. We started dating when we both were sixteen and were married at twenty. While I was a student at Southwest I was pastor of the Isabelle Baptist Church, six miles south of the Iowa line. It was 300 miles from Bolivar to my church. In order to make my Sunday engagements twice each month I would hitch-hike. I also had a church near Nevada, Missouri in the southern part of the state and my mode of transportation was the same, however, fewer miles.

Upon finishing Junior College I enrolled in the Kansas City Theological Seminary. (The name was changed later to the Central Baptist Theological Seminary).

About that time the Grand River and Jameson churches called me as pastor. We stayed at Grand River about one year and at Jameson almost five. We lived in the pastorium in Jameson. My second year in the seminary my daughter, Annalu, was born, November 26, 1935. That winter Goldie stayed in Jameson and took care of our new baby while I was in the seminary during the week. Miss Genevie Brown stayed with Goldie and Annalu. I remember well the severe winter of 1935-36. It was one of the most severe in history. During that winter I was still hitch-hiking to and from school. It took 40,000 miles of hitch-hiking to get me through school.

I was in and out of school during those early years of my ministry. Upon graduating from the seminary with a Th. B. degree I enrolled in William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri. I lacked fourteen hours having my A.B. degree when the First Baptist Church of Atlanta, Missouri called me. We moved to Atlanta. Since we lived only twenty miles from Kirksville I decided to finish my college work at the Northeast State University. This I did in one year. Upon completing my college work the seminary conferred on me the

B. D. degree.

After about three years in Atlanta we moved to Marceline, Missouri. (I should state that while I was in Atlanta I was Director of Missions for Macon Association for one year--part time.) The First Baptist Church of Marceline was my first full time pastorate. After serving the church for about three years the Missouri Baptist Convention called me to be State missionary. My territory was from the west side of Missouri to the east and all churches and associations north of the Missouri River. This was a joint effort with the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Home Mission Board.

I was missionary for two years and then was called as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Harrisonville, Missouri. To me this was the most wonderful church I ever pastored in Missouri. I was there from 1945-49. The Waldo Avenue Church, Independence, Missouri, called me in 1949. This church was one of the better organized churches in Missouri. Although our membership was about 1300 and our Sunday School attendance was 500 the church suffered internal strife.

Prior to moving to Independence I had become recognized as an effective Sunday School worker. Upon the resignation of Dr. L. A. Foster from the Sunday School Department of the Missouri Baptist Convention, the Missouri Baptist State Board called me to that position. After two months I declined the call in order to continue my pastorate of the Waldo Avenue Church. Soon thereafter I felt I had made a great mistake. However, during the time we lived in Harrisonville and Independence I worked on my Th. D. degree. I was pleased that my grades were sufficient for me to work on my Th.D. degree. I did not write my dissertation until I moved to Louisville. In 1956 I received the Th. D. degree. The title of my dissertation was "Baptist Missions in the Mountains of Kentucky."

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

In 1952 the State Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention called me to be the Director of Sunday School work. We moved to Louisville from Independence, Missouri, October 15, 1952. I served as Sunday School Director for twenty three years and seven months--until my retirement in May 1976.

My days in Kentucky have been characterized by much joy, some success and great sadness. In addition to my Sunday School work I have had the privilege of supply preaching and interim pastoring. I have been engaged in preaching all the time. Having been called to preach the opportunities provided me by the Kentucky churches brought to me much joy. I could never have continued in the Sunday School work apart from preaching. The Kentucky State Board was very liberal in giving me the privilege of preaching and interim work plus many days in other states doing Bible conferences, Sunday School work and revivals. In 1964 the Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn. sent me to Alaska to conduct V.B.S. conferences. My experience in Alaska was wonderful.

May, 1978 I completed fifty years in the ministry. Glorious years, too! I have preached more than 10,000 sermons, preached in more than 300 revivals; was pastor of ten churches in Missouri, interim pastor of twenty-eight (28) churches in Kentucky. I have worked in a V.B.S. every year since 1937. I have conducted more than 400 V.B.S. clinics; 250 funerals and 110 weddings. I have baptized 450 persons. Since most of my ministry has been in denominational work, my weddings, funerals and baptisms are far less than the average Baptist pastor who has been in the pastorate fifty years.

While in Missouri I was a member of the Missouri Baptist State Board and served on many committees.

During the last 15 years I have

developed some entertainment skills. I have also developed skills in monologuing Biblical character. I have 18 characters I monologue. I have monologued more than 250 times (84 times in 1980). More than 12,000 persons have heard the monologues. I have been called on to monologue before churches, senior citizen groups, youth meetings, Evangelistic conferences, student meetings, in homes and on television (one Sunday). Monologuing Bible Characters is a wonderful way to proclaim the Gospel. In 1959 Southwest Baptist College gave me the Life Service Award; the highest award the college gave at that time to alumni for outstanding achievements. Through the years I have written many articles for various publications of the Sunday School Board and the Kentucky Baptist Convention. For the last several years I have written the Application of the lesson for the Adults Life and Work Annual. (About three each year.)

In a previous paragraph I mentioned that the years in Kentucky have brought me both joy and sadness. I shall write briefly at this time of my great sadness and will tell more about it in another paper. On March 14, 1971 my beloved wife, Goldie, died of a heart attack. Nothing in my life affected me as her homegoing. After more than three years living alone the Lord gave me another wonderful wife, Ella Faye (Hayes). We had known each other for 20 years. I had watched her work in churches in Prestonsburg and Lexington and knew she was a wonderful Christian. I'll write more about her in another paper. Ella Faye is a graduate of Georgetown College and Southern Seminary.

It has been my privilege to lead conferences and to speak during the Sunday School weeks at Ridgecrest and Glorieta.

May 19, 1976 I reached retirement age (65). At that time the Kentucky Baptist Convention had a policy of retiring all employees at age 65. The State Convention and the Sunday School

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

Board honored me in many ways, for which I was greatly appreciative but undeserving. Ella Fay stood by me in all the honors.

From the day of my retirement I have been busy serving the Lord. I became interim pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Madisonville and then became interim pastor of the Bethlehem Baptist Church, Bremen, Kentucky. When I finished my work with that church I was made a life-long member--something unusual for a Baptist church to do.

From Bremen I went to Bowling Green where I became pastor of the Living Hope Church. This is a wonderful church (a new one). We have been showered with many wonderful blessings from these lovely people. The first year the church gained 22 members. We were in a temporary building for about 18 months. The church bought 10 acres of beautiful land located in a rather new section of Bowling Green and built a lovely building. In July 1979 the church sent Ella Faye and me on a 15 day tour of Rome, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Greece. For all the blessings and honor which has been mine I attribute them all to the lovely people which the Lord has given me to serve. They deserve all the credit.

On January 1, 1980, I became director of missions for the Franklin Association. I resigned the church at Bowling Green because it needed a pastor to live on the field. (We lived in Louisville). The Franklin Association has been so good to us and I have been busy all the time in conferences, Bible studies, administration and preaching. During this year, 1980, I have held 8 revival meetings.

The Lord is so good to us. We praise His name.

.....

The men who make history have not time to write it.

--Metternich

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF IRVINE ASSOCIATION of MISSIONARY BAPTISTS OF KENTUCKY

-by Bobby L. Rose

The Irvine Association was constituted on the third Saturday of October, 1859, at the Drowning Creek Meeting House at Panola in Madison County, Kentucky. Seven churches went into the constitution of the Association: Clear Creek, Cow Creek, Drowning Creek, Irvine, Providence, Salem and Woodward's Creek. Elder Smith Vivion Potts was chosen moderator and Elder James Richardson was chosen clerk; they were the only ministers in the organization of the Association. A resolution was adopted recommending Sabbath Schools.

With the exception of Drowning Creek, the other six churches were located in Estill County. The Clear Creek, Irvine and Woodward's Creek churches ceased to exist; however, the Irvine Church (Irvine First) was reorganized in 1900. The Cow Creek, Drowning Creek (now Panola), Providence and Salem Churches are still in existence and have been members of Boone's Creek Association since the early 1900's.

The following is a list of the original Articles of Faith of the Irvine Association:

### ARTICLES OF FAITH

- I. We believe in one true and living God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equal in essence, power and glory, yet not three Gods but ONE.
- II. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the infallible Word of God, and the only Rule of Faith and Practice.
- III. We believe in the fall of Adam and the imputation of his sins to his posterity, the corruption of his nature and the total inability of

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

man to recover himself either in part or whole.

- IV. We believe in the doctrine of Election according to the fore-knowledge of God, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.
- V. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God by the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- VI. We believe that Saints will persevere through Grace to Glory, by the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- VII. We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and that the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
- VIII. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, and the government is upon his shoulders.
- IX. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the church, and that immersion is the only mode of baptism.
- X. We believe that none but orderly church members are entitled to partake of the Lord's Supper.
- XI. We believe it to be the duty of the churches, collectively and individually, to remonstrate against other doctrines or opinions that are not in accord with the Bible.

At the first annual session in 1860, a board was appointed to be located in Irvine, Kentucky, and Elder Smith Vivion Potts was chosen missionary. In 1866 Elder Napoleon Bonaparte Johnson was employed as missionary and continued on the field for fourteen years. In 1870 Elder John Ward was appointed missionary and served the District and General Association as evangelist for five years.

Through the efforts of these hard working missionaries, the work greatly prospered between the years 1860-1880.

Through the years Sunday Schools were recommended for every church and in 1871 the committee on Sabbath Schools recommended the following resolution which passed and was adopted.

WHEREAS, Sabbath School instruction is of such vast importance as a means of the church in improving religious instruction, therefore:

RESOLVED, that we organize a Sabbath School Convention in our bounds, which was adopted and a convention was organized by appointing Elder N. B. Johnson, President; Elder S. V. Potts, Vice-President; and Ruben Munday, Secretary; with members from each church, viz: Mt. Gilead, Albert G. Ward; Drowning Creek, Coleman Ogg; Providence, James Muncie; Clear Creek, Jerry Arvin; Woodward's Creek, M. A. Brookshire; Cow Creek, Hiram Rogers; Liberty, James Brewer; Newman's, Martin Turpin; Mt. Zion, Joseph Mc Swain; South Fork, A. Williams; Bethlehem, John Witt; Chinquepin Rough, Elder William S. Adams; Pleasant Grove, William Benge; Rock Lick, Henry Mc Guire, Clover Bottom, Jefferson Daugherty; Wisemantown, J. B. Mansfield; the first meeting to be held with South Fork Church in Jackson County, on Friday before the second Saturday in November, 1871...

The following essay, in the original handwriting of Elder N. B. Johnson, is in the possession of Mrs. C. A. Christopher, a granddaughter of N. B. Johnson, of Ravenna, Kentucky. It is apparent from reading the following essay that Sunday Schools had not been universally accepted in 1872.

An essay read by Elder N. B. Johnson on the duty of the ministry in sustaining Sabbath Schools at the meeting of the Sunday School Convention of Irvine Association, 12th of April, 1872.

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

It surely requires no argument to prove that ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to zealously encourage every good word and work. They are to be examples to the believers and the unbelievers and be ready and willing to labor in every good work which has for its end the salvation of sinners and the glory of our Redeemer. The only questions then are: (1) Is the Sunday School work a good work and (2) how shall ministers best labor to advance that work?

Let us consider first, 'Is the Sunday School work a good work'? The opposition to Sunday School by some Christians arises mostly from a misunderstanding of the real nature of Sunday School. They imagine that a Sunday School is a place where we propose to 'make children Christians.' This is a great mistake for we know and teach that God only can convert sinners and make Christians of them. It is the work of the blessed Spirit to do this. But we find that God commanded the Jews to teach to their children all the words of His Holy law and to explain to them the meaning of His worship. This can be proven by referring to Deuteronomy 6:7, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk with them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Also, in Proverbs 22:6, 'Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Paul says in Eph. 6:4, 'And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'

It is true that this is primarily the duty of all parents and every father and mother is under the most solemn obligation to thus teach, train, instruct, and bring up their children. God will certainly hold them responsible if they neglect it.

Now the Sunday School is intended to aid in this Holy work. And here the efforts of the ministry can be brought to bear in connection with the teachers and parents, and thus by a united effort, all the dear children and youth can be gathered together in Sunday Schools for the purpose of teaching them God's word and will. Can anything be wrong in this? Surely not, for it is the duty of all who love our Savior to try to get every old and young sinner to love Jesus and accept His pardoning power upon His terms. The seeds of Holy Truth thus sown in the minds of the young often bring forth abundant harvests to the glory of Jesus in coming years.

And not only is the Sunday School thus a source of sacred improvements to the young, but the teachers are also benefited by the study of God's word and by teaching His truth to others. And I remark right here that every one, old and young, in the church or out, might very profitably spend the Sunday School hours in thus teaching or studying God's Holy Book.

Surely, then, the first question must be answered, 'Yes, the Sunday School is a good work.'

We come now to consider our second question, 'How shall ministers sustain best the Sunday School work'? This opens up a wide field of discussion. I can but briefly glance at some of its aspects. I answer first by instructing the churches in regard to the true nature and duty of this work. Our members generally are too negligent and unfaithful to their obligations as parents and as Christians. Ministers should publicly and privately enforce the scriptural teachings on this subject and urge the people to their duty. If we can once get our members to feel their obligations and the duty resting on

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

them as Christians, there will be little trouble in getting them to take an interest in our Sunday School work.

The ministry can do much, secondly, in advancing this work by giving more personal attention to the subject. Many ministers very seldom visit their Sunday Schools. Now, if our people see us careless in this matter, how can we expect them to be otherwise? Every minister should go among the children as often as possible and take an interest in their lessons. It was the custom in the early churches as we learn from history for the pastor to gather the young regularly together for instruction in holy things. This good custom is still maintained in some parts of the world and in some congregations in this country. At these meetings the pastor asks questions about the Bible and the children answer them. Probably separate meetings are not the best, but the pastor should go directly to the Sunday School and there show the people by his Godly counsel and instructions that his heart is burning with anxiety and prayer for the salvation of the young as well as the old.

Let us frequently gather the teachers together and talk with them about their sacred duties and devise plans for greater usefulness in their sacred work. Thus, we will encourage them to toil on as faithful servants in the vineyard of the blessed Lord.

Finally, brethren, we can not afford to neglect the young. Youth is the time when the mind is more impressionable and when the memory is most retentive. If we do not seek to impress those young minds with holiness and to store those memories with God's truth, Satan and heresy will fill them with sin and false doctrine. If we want them to become well instructed members of our church when it shall please God to convert them, then we should begin now to train them in the teachings of the sacred oracles.

Oh, let us all my dear brethren awaken to our duty. Let us go forth laboring

for Jesus everywhere among all, old and young, rich and poor, and God will bless our efforts for His glory.

And at last how sweet it will be to sing praises of Jesus around the throne with those who have been led to embrace His pardoning love through our instrumentality. Praying God's blessings to attend all the efforts of His people for good, I remain yours in Christ.

N.B.J.

The minutes of Irvine Association for 1865 records the following description of the bounds of the Association:

Our Association is bound west and north by Boone's Creek, south and west by Tates Creek, and south by the Jackson Association--forming a boundary line, say to commence on the Kentucky River, a few miles above the mouth of Red River, and from there southward to the head of the Red Lick Fork of Station Camp and from there eastward through Jackson County into Clay County, Kentucky, to the head waters of Sexton's Creek; and from there, in a northwest direction to the three forks of the Kentucky River, and to continue on the north side of the river to the beginning, in the lower edge of Estill County.

The territory covered by Irvine Association grew even larger as indicated by the report given by N. B. Johnson in 1870. He refers to his field of labor as 'including the counties of Madison, Estill, Owsley, Breathitt and Wolfe.' The present bounds of Lee County was also included since it was formed from parts of surrounding counties in 1870. In 1871 the missionary report of John Ward refers to his laboring in the counties of Jackson, Laurel, Estill, Owsley and Clay.

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

The 1876 minutes of Irvine Association contains the following resolution concerning alien baptism:

*WHEREAS, there being a difference in the action of some of our churches in regard to receiving members from other denominations on their baptism, therefore believing as we do that the Gospel requires a Gospel subject, a Gospel action, and a Gospel administrator to constitute legal baptism, therefore*

*RESOLVED, that we as an Association recommend to all the churches of our body to adopt a uniform rule of action, and that in the future we receive none except penitent believers being baptized by a qualified Gospel administrator, set apart to the work by a Gospel church.*

N.B. Johnson

Over the years, Irvine Association has been very strong at times and not so strong at others. Perhaps one of the major problems has been that seven associations were formed from the territory originally occupied by Irvine Association. In addition to Irvine Association, the other associations are Booneville Association, constituted in 1871; Greenville Association, constituted in 1879; Goose Creek Association, constituted in 1896; Landmark Association, constituted in 1897; Clover Bottom Association, constituted in 1898; Three Forks Association, constituted in 1901; and Jackson County Association, constituted in 1925. With the exceptions of Irvine, Jackson County, Booneville and Three Forks, the other Associations have ceased to exist.

The most complete set of Irvine Association minutes known to be in existence, which includes copies of all but eight years, is in the library at Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. Rev. and Mrs. James T. Sasser of Richmond, Kentucky, have been instrumental in locating many of these old copies and donating them to the Seminary;

the writer of this history located the only known existing copies for the years 1879 and 1880.

The 1980 minutes of the Irvine Association reported thirteen churches with a total membership of 1,630. The McKee Church with 264 members is the largest. Rev. Elmer Wiley is listed as district missionary for Irvine and Booneville Associations. Eleven of the thirteen churches are located in Jackson County with one each from Madison and Lee Counties. The churches from Jackson County are Annville, Clover Bottom, Deer Stables, Egypt, Gray Hawk, McKee, Mt. Zion, New Zion, Oak Grove, Tyner and Wind Cave. Red Lick Church is located in Madison County and Stone Coal is located in Lee County.

The territory presently occupied by Irvine Association seems small indeed compared with the territory it once occupied. Both Irvine Association and Jackson County Association are located primarily in Jackson County. In addition to the original territory of Irvine Association which has been absorbed by Jackson County, Booneville and Three Forks Associations, most of Estill County has been absorbed by Boone's Creek Association and most of Lee, Wolfe, and Breathitt Counties have been absorbed by Red River Association.

Irvine Association seems to be on the upward move again and who knows but what it may regain the grandeur of greatness it once possessed when it included churches from the counties of Estill, Madison, Jackson, Rockcastle, Laurel, Clay, Owsley, Lee, Breathitt and Wolfe.

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MINUTES OF IRVINE ASSOCIATION.

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NAPOLEON BONAPARTE JOHNSON

by Bobby L. Rose

Elder Napoleon Bonaparte Johnson was a descendant from one of the distinguished families in Kentucky. His grandfather was a brother to the famous pioneer, Colonel Robert Johnson, of Scott County; his father was first cousin to Richard M. Johnson, Vice-President of the United States, 1837-1841, and credited with killing the Shawnee Indian Chief, Tecumseh.

N. B. Johnson was born in Fayette County, Kentucky, March 5, 1816. His parents being of reduced circumstances, he received only a common school education. In early life he joined the 'Campbellites' and was immersed for the remission of sins. He became a skillful mechanic; but, alas, he also became a drunkard and spent a number of years in wasteful diversion. On October 28, 1846, he married Edith Martin of Clark County and continued to divide his time between drunkenness and labor until about 1858 when he was convicted by the Holy Spirit and he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

Elder N. B. Johnson was baptized and entered into the constitution of Waco Baptist Church, near where he lived at Waco in Madison County. He was ordained into the ministry October 25, 1862, by Thornton I. Wills, Nathan Edmonson and James Jesse Edwards. In October 1866 he accepted the appointment of missionary by the General Association of Kentucky Baptists and served in the bounds of Irvine Association for fourteen years when he resigned due to ill health. His report for eleven of those years shows he traveled 19,096 miles over

his mountainous field, preached 2,603 sermons, delivered 1,137 exhortations, made 1,323 religious visits, witnessed 1,109 additions to the churches, baptized 861 persons in eight years, organized 112 Sunday Schools, constituted (with help) ten churches and distributed large quantities of religious literature.

N. B. Johnson labored on the same field in the Irvine Association with James Jesse Edwards and others. He served as moderator of Irvine Association during the years 1873, 1874, 1875, 1878, 1879 and 1880. His labors proved most valuable because of his ability as an excellent organizer and disciplinarian and had much to do with the great success and growth of Irvine Association during that period.

In 1879 N. B. Johnson left the missionary field because of failing health and devoted the brief remainder of his life to the duties of the pastoral office. He served churches at Crab Orchard in Lincoln County, Waco and Drowning Creek (Panola) in Madison County, Cow Creek and Providence in Estill County, and many others. He proved to be a good pastor.

The following letter was found in an old house near Waco, Kentucky, and it was published in a special edition of the Citizen Voice and Times newspaper in Irvine, Kentucky, Saturday, December 4, 1976. Not only does the sketch of Rev. Johnson's trip into the mountains give some insight into his work as a missionary in Irvine Association, but it also reveals some of his wit and sense of humor. It might be interesting to note that Brother Woolfolk, to whom he refers, is Elder Lucian B. Woolfolk who had been called as pastor of First Baptist Church, Winchester, Kentucky, in January 1870 and later served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky, 1873-1878. The Brother Darnaby mentioned was probably Elder Edward Darnaby of Clark County. Also, his reason for going to Booneville to repair machinery to get some money to pay his way to Louisville

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

the first of May was his having been chosen as one of nine delegates from Irvine Association to attend the General Association of Kentucky Baptists to convene in Louisville in May.

Waco, Kentucky  
April 4, 1870

Mrs. Lizzie Alberta

Dear Sister in Christ,

This beautiful morning finds me at home again in the middle of my dear family, and through the blessings of Our Father, we are all enjoying good health. I arrived home on last evening about sun-down having rode from Cow Creek after meeting. I have been absent from home three weeks and four days laboring in the cause of my blessed Savior in the counties of Estill, Wolfe, and Breathitt. I can truly say that the good Lord has owned and blessed His truth, though delivered through a weak servant.

I have been permitted to pass through many scenes since I left home. I did not preach longer than three days at any point. My object was to keep up a sort of running fire, or was acting on the skirmish line all the time. I captured from the army of the devil 22 persons and they, having sworn allegiance to the cause of Christ, are now enlisted in the cause of Christ and marching under the glorious flag of Jesus.

My object in visiting from church to church and from house to house was to mix with the old anti-brethren and sisters and try to get them right upon the subject of missions and Sunday School. I am satisfied that my visit among them has proved a great success and they are fully satisfied now that a Missionary is not such a huge and dangerous animal as they supposed him to be.

I had an appointment in a neighborhood through which a show had passed a few days before. In the morning of my meeting, an old lady came and found her two

girls fixing for meeting. She said to them, 'Where are you going?' They replied, 'To meeting.' 'That you ain't, not a foot do you go today, for it's my time now; I never saw one in my life.' So she came and was well pleased. She said if that was a sample of a missionary she had no objections to them.

I found the brethren and sisters everywhere willing to receive the truth, as it is Christ Jesus. They have been guiled by ignorant men and those that would be leaders; but when God's truth is presented, prejudice and ignorance give way.

I will now give you a short sketch of my trip:

I left home on Thursday after the first Saturday in March and reached old Brother Lowery's six miles above Furnace on Friday. I reached Brother L. Drake's in Wolfe County where I held a few days meeting and left six approved for baptism. Then I crossed the North Fork of the Kentucky River, (here I had to swim my horse, but I didn't mind that for you know we Baptists believe in going down into the water) and preached at Brother C. Lutes' at night to a very large congregation.

Next morning, in company with several brethren and sisters, I crossed the Middle Fork and preached Saturday and Sunday. I then, in company with Judge Strong and Mr. Bailey, a young lawyer, went up within four miles of Jackson, the county seat of Breathitt, and preached there three days and nights. It being Quarterly Court, Judge Strong kindly gave me the Courthouse every day at 11 o'clock. I had a large crowd day and night and good attention. It was remarked by many that I had larger congregations and better attention than any man that had ever preached there. They urged me to visit them again as often as possible. There is no church of any kind in the town.

From here, I passed up ten miles

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

to a church at Quick Sand and preached two days. From here I passed over on Bloody Creek and then to White Oak and preached at Union Church which I constituted in January. She has received 17 additions since being organized. From here, I passed over Upper Devil's Creek and preached at Mr. William Drake's at night. Next I passed over on lower Devil's Creek and preached at Booth's Mill. The next day, Thursday, I laid up at Bro. Drake's, it being too disagreeable to travel. Friday, I had to start home, rain or shine, so I set out for home and had to cross Devil's Creek, Walker's Creek and Hell Creek and I reached Brother William Barnes' on Cow Creek, Friday, about 5 o'clock. I preached at Cow Creek Saturday and Sunday.

The people in the mountains are well pleased with the prospect of our Sunday School celebration. I am fully satisfied my dear sister that Brother Little's glorious week well proved a grand success and is the means in the hand of God of leading many souls to Christ.

I sent to Waco today and the box you sent had not come to hand yet. Sister Lizzie, I captured by consent of owner while in the mountains two very nice venison hams. I shall send you one of them by the stage in a day or two and I want you and Sister McCann to meet at the half way house (Sister Darnaby's) and have it cooked to suit your taste. Try and meet on the same day that will suit Brother Woolfolk. I think if he could get a mess or two of venison he would be fully able to demolish Campbellism completely and for the sake of manners don't forget Brothers Alberta, Darnaby and Buckner.

And now Sister Lizzie, I know you are a woman of sense and judgment but I think something you like is discretion. Be sure when you are eating the venison to remember the sassafras tea and beef steak. A hint to the wise is sufficient.

I shall not be able to do much labor or missionary work this month. I have to start to Irvine next Thursday and from there to Booneville to repair some machinery to get some money to pay my way to Louisville the first of May.

My horse, the only one I have, caught his foot in a bridge in the mountains and is very lame so I am afoot for this. But my motto is trust in the Lord and do good. If two or three of our wealthy churches would take this matter in hand, 50 cents of \$1.00 from each one would enable me to get a horse. I think I ought to have two so my wife could go to meeting sometimes with me.

N.B. Johnson

The death notice of Elder J. W. Trent in the obituary section of the 1877 General Association Minutes reflects upon the fruits of N. B. Johnson's labors in Breathitt County:

Elder J. W. Trent was a member and minister of the Methodist Church about five or six years and was received and baptized by Elder N. B. Johnson in 1870 or 1871. While a minister of the Methodist Church, he was not only zealous in the Master's cause but useful in serving others. He died of consumption when about 40 years old and was pastor of White Oak and Greenville Churches when he died in Breathitt County, Kentucky, January 1877.

N. B. Johnson served as pastor of Providence Baptist Church, Estill County, from January 1881 through April 1881 when he was forced to resign due to ill health. After lingering illness several months with paralysis, Napoleon Bonaparte Johnson died at his home near Waco, Kentucky, on November 12, 1882, and was buried in Flatwood Cemetery, Madison County, Kentucky.

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

The following resolution concerning the death of N. B. Johnson was furnished by Mrs. C. A. Christopher of Ravenna, Kentucky. Mrs. Christopher is a granddaughter of N. B. Johnson. She has the original handwritten copy from the Crab Orchard Church in Lincoln County:

*December 16, 1882  
Resolution  
concerning the death of  
Rev. N. B. Johnson*

Your committee to whom was offered the duty of presenting suitable resolutions in regard to the death of our late and well beloved pastor, N. B. Johnson, would offer the following as a well deserved but feeble expression of our personal sorrow and sincere sympathy with the sorely bereaved and afflicted family.

Brother Johnson was our pastor for years and ever showed himself to be not only a true Christian gentleman, but also a good minister of Jesus Christ, a faithful soldier of the cross.

By his untiring and unselfish efforts to minister to the wants of the sick, the afflicted and the distressed, he rose and held the warmest affections not only of the Church but of the entire community.

So that with the family we can truly say our grief is personal for we have all lost a true friend, a Christian Brother. We thank God for so true and good a man and for giving him to labor among us, for he did a good work and we will all hold his memory in highest esteem.

We, of course, bow submissive to the all-wise-Providence which has taken him away, feeling assured that he is now at ease with God and will in the day of accounts receive the plaudit, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

We tender his sad family our sincere sympathy, our earnest prayers and if need be, our pecuniary substance.

Therefore, be it resolved that a copy of this imperfect expressions of our hearts' bereavements be recorded in our Church Book of minutes and that a copy be forwarded to the family.

James McAllister  
G. W. James  
G. W. King  
J. H. Hutchings

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1856-1978.

MINUTES OF GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF KENTUCKY BAPTISTS.

MINUTES OF IRVINE ASSOCIATION.

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### MEASURE

Count your garden by the flowers,  
Never by the leaves that fall;  
Count your days by golden hours,  
Don't remember clouds at all.  
Count your nights by stars, not shadows,  
Count your life by smiles, not tears;  
And with joy on every birthday,  
Count your age by friends, not years.

--Dixie Willson

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

Our last issue contained introduction and Chapter I-- The following is the second chapter of its history. This history will be completed in future issues.

MAYS LICK BAPTIST CHURCH  
Mays Lick, Kentucky

### Chapter II

Notwithstanding her pastorless condition, the church prospered, and when a pastor was secured the membership was about one hundred. Additions by letter, experience and baptism were continually being made to her number. Rev. Wood administered the ordinance of baptism when it was necessary. The growth is the more remarkable when we remember that "spiritual lethargy" reigned over all of Kentucky during that period; and that infidelity and immorality became bolder and more shameless during this long dark religious night than there had been before or since. In the Central part of the state, there was practically nothing being done by the first preachers of that day. The light of the Lord became brighter and brighter during this time. Naturally there was a constant search for the reason for this dearth. It is in some degree to be attributed to the flood of immigrants pouring into the state. There were as many, if not more white inhabitants in the Mays Lick district in 1795 to 1810 than there were in 1890. A plurality of these immigrants came from Virginia where Baptist sentiment was quite strong. But all parts of the state alike received this flood of newcomers, and we must look elsewhere for the secrets of May's Lick prosperity. These secrets will not be hard to find if we look at the character of the members, their church life and customs.

Davis Morris, Cornelius Drake, John Shotwell and William Allen, the four leading members for many years who gave direction and tone to the church, were men whom we cannot find sufficient words to define or express their worth. Let

us try to bring to you a mental picture of these men of God as follows:

Davis Morris, the first deacon, could be found conducting the services of the church during the absence of the pastor. These services were conducted in a barn before the first house of worship was built. He served the Master in the church until the Lord took him home in 1798.

Cornelius Drake was a man of Irenic mind and of gentle, exemplary piety, and the Lord spared him to the church until 1833.

William Allen, for forty years a deacon, of whom the church in 1802 put on record their opinion of him, "as being as near the character of a Deacon as we could expect in this imperfect state," was a man of deep conscientiousness and unbending firmness. He was terror to evil doers and always arraigned those before the church who were guilty of breaches of the faith and good conduct. I dare say that he called for church discipline upon more cases than any three members, but with no other purpose than to discharge his covenanted duties and obligations of his office. He rendered the church an important service in the Scism caused by Alexander Campbell, who spearheaded the so-called "Revolution Movement." The Lord took him home in 1838, the same year that the First Baptist Church of Maysville, Kentucky was reorganized.

There were many others of the first members, Hixon, Longly, Young and Johnson, worthy of more attention than the mention of their names. The want of space forbids it.

Their solemn covenant was a document that meant something to them, for in it they summed up what they firmly believed to be their Christian duty. They agreed to "watch over each others conversation, and not to suffer sin upon one another so far as God

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST HERITAGE

shall discover it to us." Most jealously did they discharge this duty. The discipline of the church was rigid and certain, impartial and covered a large variety of offenses, in fact, the chief object of the monthly business meetings was discipline. There were business meetings it is true, but not of a financial character. The minutes for twenty years commenced with these two sentences, "The Church met according to appointment to consult the affairs of the same for God's Glory and the good discipline thereof. In the next chapter we will take up the phrase, "Peace among ourselves."

E. C. Goins, Editor

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He presents me with what is always an acceptable gift who bring me news of a great thought before unknown. He enriches me without impoverishing himself.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

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### KENTUCKY BAPTIST HISTORICAL COMMISSION

#### 1. Program of Work

1. The Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission shall be responsible for organizing and increasing the membership and promoting the interests of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society whose membership shall be open to all interested individuals.

2. The Commission will be charged with the responsibility of directing a program of work which will include the following:

- (1) The gathering, preserving, and servicing of materials of historical interest to the Ken-

tucky Baptist Convention; and engaging in the dissemination of such historical information as may be deemed wise;

- (2) Giving assistance and encouragement to churches, associations, agencies, and institutions of the Convention in gathering, preserving, and using their historical information and records; and sharing copies of such records with the Commission for its Archives;
- (3) Cooperating with the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and other Baptist historical groups;
- (4) Reporting to the Convention on a program basis.

#### 2. Finances

1. The Commission shall make annual budgetary requests for expenses through regular channels to the Executive Board.

2. The present assets and future income of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society shall be retained by the treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention on a cumulative basis for use as directed by the Commission.

(NOTE: As adopted by the Kentucky Baptist Convention May 16, 1966.)

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"There is hardly anything that someone cannot make worse and sell cheaper. He who considers price only, is this man's lawful prey.

--John Ruskin

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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.

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

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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 \$2.50 (Personal and Institutions)

Life membership \$25.00

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