



Then & Now

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A monthly update for Florida Baptist Historical Society Board of Directors and friends

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Dear Board Members and Friends of FBHS,

Due to the wonderful work of good researchers like Judy and Lawson Jolly and Penny Baumgardner we have the opportunity to highlight special Florida Baptists from time to time. This month I want to introduce you to James Hamilton Wentworth (1836-1893).

A confession is in order. I picked Wentworth to highlight for one special reason. According to the 1875 Florida Baptist Association minutes Bro. Wentworth was pastor of seven Baptist churches at the same time! (Cabbage Grove, Harmony, Shady Grove, New Macedonia, Perry, Salem and Spring Warrior). As far as I know that is a record in the Florida Baptist State Convention. But that is only the beginning. Let me list some additional highlights:

1. School Teacher in Taylor County.
2. School Superintendent in Taylor County.
3. Taylor County Judge.
4. Taylor County Chairman of the County Commissioners.
5. Postmaster at Shady Grove.
6. Surveyed and platted the town of Perry.
7. Lieutenant in the Florida 5th Regiment in the Civil War.
8. Captured at Gettysburg on July 3, 1863 and became a POW.
9. Ordained Baptist preacher.
10. Father of 14 children.

In the 1875 Florida Baptist Association minutes it is reported that Bro. Wentworth baptized 129 people in the seven churches where he was pastor. He baptized 36 into the Perry church and they had ten to come by letter. This was all at a time when the Perry church had a total of 87 members.

Bro Wentworth was born October 27, 1836 in Screven County, Georgia and died December 8, 1893, in Pensacola, Florida. He was a man among men. He was a preacher, pastor, politician, planner, postmaster, platter and professional educator. Men like these were doing faithful kingdom work before the year 1900 got here. Giant oaks live, grow and die. And they do leave everlasting impressions.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer



James Hamilton Wentworth
1836-1893