



Here & Now

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An update for Florida Baptist Historical Society Board of Directors and friends

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Sec. Treas.



Penny Baumgardner
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Dear Board Members and Friends of the Florida Baptist Historical Society,

Today I want you to think with me about the Oswald Benjamin Falls family. O. B. Falls (1877-1967), was born in Bedford County, Virginia. He attended school at Fork Union Academy, Richmond College and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as pastor of Fulton Avenue Baptist Church in Baltimore (1907-1911), FBC, Denison, Texas (1911-1914), FBC, Bay City, Texas (1914-1916), FBC, Kissimmee, Florida (1922-1926) and Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church in Washington, D. C. (1926-1927).



Oswald Benjamin Falls

Falls married Glennie Parker, who was born in Berwick, Nova Scotia, and they had five children: Howard, Oswald Jr., Helen, Catherine (born in Kissimmee) and Margaret. The *Florida Baptist Witness* of July 1, 1920, stated that O. B. Falls was a "good preacher and a good pastor" who did a good work at Kissimmee. He followed C. M. Brittain and A. J. Holt as pastor at Kissimmee and was succeeded by Walter B. Knight and G. A. Ratterree.

It is the life of Helen Emery Falls (1916-2012) that we want to highlight and honor at this time. Dr. Falls was born April 17, 1916, in Bay City, Texas. In an interview in 2003 she said she was brought to Florida as a baby in a basket when her family moved to Kissimmee. She graduated from the University of Richmond (1936), Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1941), and Columbia University (1953, 1964). Dr. Falls taught Missions at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary from 1945-1982. Dr. Falls traveled extensively and visited missionaries on four continents and in 80 countries. Her hobbies were travel, knitting, needlepoint, reading and classical music. She never married but was known as "Aunt Helen" by scores of MK's and children of seminary students. She was known for her extensive letter writing and completely refused to join the computer technological world. In her retirement in Richmond, Virginia, she used an electric typewriter in her correspondence until November, 2005, when she began to write personal letters in that beautiful script she always had. She had correspondence with the Windsor family over a span of years and especially loved Jerry Mae Talley Windsor who was her personal secretary over forty years ago. I want to share some very choice comments from these years of correspondence with the Windsor family.

July 11, 1998, Dear Jerry Mae, If you had a letter from me every time you have been in my thoughts, you would have a freight car load by now...I think of you and pray for you and your family.

July 10, 2000, Dear Jerry Mae, What happy memories I have of our years together in New Orleans...I have had a whole new life in retirement. For the first eight years I did nine visiting professorships from California to Virginia...I find it difficult to accept some of the "contemporary" music, including ballet dancing as part of the Sunday morning worship service...Does Jerry get to preach often-or is it too often?...In Virginia we have the Virginia Association, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Conservative Baptists. It is a difficult problem to know how one's money is being spent.



Dr. Helen Falls

July 10, 2001, Dear Jerry Mae, It would be great if you were sitting here in my den and we could catch up on conversation. It would take several days...I did retire at the right time with all that has happened in the denomination and especially in theological education. I do still miss the classroom and, of course, the students...you are correct-what would happen to missionary education in the churches without women?...I look forward to your promise to come to see me.

April 13, 2002, Dear Jerry Mae,...I am not going to resort to a rocking chair as many do...I have seen notices in denominational papers "advertising" for a pastor. Frankly, I do not think this is a proper way for a man to be called to a ministry...I am still doing my volunteer work at the FMB...I always thought Tom Kinchen was very capable and through the early years I wished for him and Jerry to be chosen for the faculty at N. O....I have never been able to find out anything about Nell Davidson. She just disappeared. I think either she is in a nursing home or has died...Dr. Kennedy has been great about keeping in touch with me...we can keep in touch through our heavenly father—and Uncle Sam...I am sure I should have gotten a computer a long time ago but I was not interested in learning all that...

December 27, 2003, Thank you for keeping me on the mailing list for the Historical Society.



January 27, 2004...I always have plenty to do and do not know what it means to be lonely...I am interested in everything related to Florida Baptists...when I joined the (NOBTS) faculty in September, 1945, I was the seventh member of the faculty-and I think now I am the only remaining member of that group...I found a picture of Caroline and John Mark when they were children...

March 26, 2004...The IMB is moving the archives this month to a building off the grounds...I have finished the four projects on which I worked thirteen years...I was excited to learn last week that Lottie Moon offering will be larger than last year...Jerry, I like your *Then and Now*...I am still enjoying all the peanut goodies you sent at Christmas.

June 30, 2004...I know the swift passage of time is an indication of old age but I am not in that group...I read your trivia questions with much interest...I am still glad that I gave the Birmingham office of WMU about a thousand (books) before I came to Richmond...he (doctor) wants me to continue to carry my cane. Often I just go barreling along down the hall with it swinging on my arm...How nice to hear that Tom has built a house there which means, to me, that he plans to stay there...I was given a pin for the 3,000 hours I spent...(volunteer service to the IMB)

November 1, 2004, Dear Jerry and Jerry Mae too...How many years have we been friends????

December 10, 2004, Dear Jerry Mae and Jerry,...I found a treasure of peanuts...you really make this child happy and I thank you...my book is the Bible...enclosed letter which I sent to about 100 missionary friends...Most of the many I have known through the years have either received their coronation or are retired...

July 27, 2005, Dear Jerry Mae and Jerry, This is just the second letter I have written on the typewriter in 2005...I hope you have stayed well and active. Do not think about getting old-just stay active...

November 15, 2005, Dear Jerry May and Jerry,
No I have not died...the pain in my hands makes typing and knitting impossible...Thank you for all you mean to me.

March 15, 2006, Dear Jerry Mae and Jerry, I read the reports of the FBHS with much interest. I support the Virginia Society but since I have some roots in Florida, I need to be a part of the society. My check is enclosed...Dr. Leavell writes me regularly and says the estimate for getting everything back to normal (Hurricane Katrina) is \$30 million...

June 13, 2006, Jerry...It was great to have the visit with you and Jerry Mae. Do it again.

August 10, 2006, Dear Jerry May and Jerry,...I hope Denton Lotz may stay until the SBC returns to support the BWA...I hope you come to Richmond often.

January 29, 2007, Dear Jerry May and Jerry...We are fortunate to have Dr. Dilday...as interim (FBC, Richmond)...He is an excellent preacher and is good for us.

January 24, 2008, Dear Jerry Mae and Jerry,...I think of you often and pray for you and your ministry...The hospital for which I make caps for newborns sent me a frantic appeal for more...I am still making them but not as quickly...I understand that our mailman says that I receive more mail than any of the 460 residents.

July 5, 2011, Dear Jerry May...I am doing about the same...friends from the Sunday School class are great about coming...I am ashamed of this poor letter...my fingers do not work very well...I think of both of you and appreciate all you have done for me.

January 27, 2012, Dear Jerry May and Jerry...I grew up hearing about the 75 Million Campaign. My father had a happy pastorate at Kissimmee. I arrived there when I was four weeks old.

May 11, 2012, Dear Jerry May and Jerry...The SBC has changed so much...I am delighted about taking (WMU) the R. A.'s back. I wish I could be there (New Orleans, SBC, 2012)...May God continue to bless.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Matthew 6:33



Dr. Helen Falls
and Jerry Mae Windsor
In 2002