



Here & Now

Vol. 5

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

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

W. D. Chipley (1840-1897) was a railroad man. William Dudley Chipley was born June 6, 1840, in Columbus, Georgia. His father (William Stout Chipley) was a medical doctor and his grandfather (Stephen Chipley) was a preacher. The Chipleys came out of Kentucky to Columbus, Georgia and then to Pensacola, Florida. Chipley was a Colonel in the confederate army, wounded at Shiloh and taken prisoner to Johnsons' island. After the war he married Ann Elizabeth Billups, the daughter of a prominent planter in Russell County, Alabama and they eventually moved to Pensacola. Ann Elizabeth was a member of the Florida delegation in 1888 that attended an organizational meeting of women in Richmond, Virginia. There they formed the Southern Baptist Convention Woman's Mission Societies. Therefore through Mrs. Chipley and others Florida was one of the ten states that became charter members of Woman's Missionary Union. As they celebrate their 125th Anniversary this year the Chipley/Florida/WMU connection is alive and well.

W. D. Chipley was many times mayor of Pensacola, served as a Florida State senator and was a friend of Florida Baptists. A monument was erected in Pensacola upon his death and he was known as "soldier-statesman and public benefactor."

Chipley was a railroad man. He built the Columbus and Rome railroad company. In 1876, he assumed control of the Pensacola railroad, which became a part of the Louisville and Nashville railroad system.



W. D. Chipley

Florida Baptists traveled by train. Automobiles were not dependable and roads were too many times impassable. Railway travel was inexpensive and rail lines reached out all across Florida. In 1886, the January 14 issue of the *Florida Baptist Witness* said, "the church bell must follow the whistle of the locomotive." An effort was made by Florida Baptists to build a Baptist church building at every county seat and every main line train stop.

In 1905, the Southern Baptist Convention met in Kansas City and "The Baptist Special" train ran on the "Dixie Flyer" route to take Baptists to their annual gathering.

In 1920, the Southern Baptist Convention met in Washington D. C. Special arrangements were made by the Seaboard rail line to assist Baptists to get to this meeting. The Seaboard Airline Railroad was begun in 1900, and the main line ran from Jacksonville to Savannah, to Raleigh to Richmond. The special train schedule had two departures. Both plans took 25 hours by train from Jacksonville to Washington. You could leave Jacksonville at 8:55 am and arrive in Washington at 9:40 am the next day. The *Florida Baptist Witness* (April 22, 1920, p. 10), promoted the convention trip and announced that the round trip cost would be \$34.08, for the train and an extra \$4.97 if you wanted a Pullman sleeper. Meals aboard the train were a la carte and beautiful sight



Ann Elizabeth
Chipley



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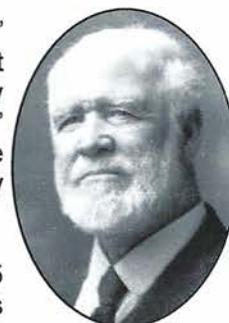
seeing was guaranteed. If you had a "Minister's Permit" you could often times ride for free. In 1969, I stayed in Spurgeon Hall as a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and there was a pastor on my hall who lived in Jacksonville and rode the train each week from New Orleans to Jacksonville at no cost. He left New Orleans on Friday afternoon and in that the seminary had no Monday classes he did not return to school until Monday night. Therefore his "Minister's Permit" helped him remain in the Jacksonville pastorate and attend NOBTS during the week.



Pullman dining car

The 1920 Convention would have been a good one to attend. It met May 12-17, 1920, in Liberty Hut, and Vice President of the United States, Thomas R. Marshall, brought greetings, and Convention President J. B. Gambrell of Texas presided. Meals in Washington D. C. were 35¢ to 85¢ each and a hotel stay was \$1.25 to \$5.00 per night. Technically a Florida Baptist could have attended the six day 1920 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Washington D. C., including transportation and meals for the sum of \$55.00. There was a 7% war tax on train tickets and some other items that would have also had to have been paid.

All Florida Baptists were offered a Seaboard Railroad "Certificate for reduced rates" pass that could help them travel by train for about one cent per mile. President Woodrow Wilson sent his warmest regards to the convention and on Sunday, May 16, 1920, George W. Truett gave his famous "Baptists and Religious Liberty" address on the east steps of the capital building. There were over 10,000 people present. J. B. Gambrell declared the address was "a noble piece of work" and worthy of "wide circulation."



J. B. Gambrell



George W. Truett

The Florida Baptist Convention was entitled to 315 representatives and had 134 present. C. M. Brittain was present and C. W. Duke, O. B. Falls, H. C. Garwood, W. A. Hobson, J. E. Trice and J. L. White. Scores of women attended including Mrs. H. C. Peelman, Mrs. S. B. Rogers and Mrs. Pat Trammell.

I would have liked to have been there. I also would like to go to six days of SBC meetings in Washington D. C., for a total of \$55.00. The economy has changed. The convention meeting days have been shortened but we can still be grateful for men like Chipley, Gambrell and Truett who helped lay such a grand foundation for our work today.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Matthew 6:33



Pullman open platform observation car