



Here & Now

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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,

It has been our recent privilege to receive books and papers from the life and estate of William James Bolin. This was made possible by a family member who is an architect in Nashville, Tennessee. The books and papers are part of the writing, preaching, teaching and research ministry of Bolin from 1888 until the time of his death.

William James Bolin (1862-1960) was born at Brown's Creek in Henderson County, Tennessee. He was the son of John and Elmina Clark Bolin. He had five brothers and two sisters and was raised in Clinton, Kentucky (1864-1886). Bolin received a remarkable formal education for his day. He received a B. A. degree from Clinton, College in 1886, and attended Andover Newton (1886-1887) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1893-1894). He married Elnora Stubblefield in 1888 and upon her death married Callie Stubblefield in 1897. He had five children and in his life worked as a school teacher, newspaper editor and pastor.



William James Bolin

Bolin was converted in 1876 at age 14 and baptized in 1880, at the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, Clinton, Kentucky. He was ordained at Mt. Moriah in 1886, and served as pastor of 16 different churches in four different states from 1888-1942.

Some of the better known pastorates of Bolin include First Baptist Church, Milan, Tennessee (1890-1893); First Baptist Church, Orlando (1894-1895); First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge (1903-1907); First Baptist Church, Newport, Kentucky (1912-1913); First Baptist Church, Lakeland (1920-1925); and First Baptist Church, Ruston, Louisiana.

Bolin showed no prejudice about places served and in 1935 he published *A Pilgrim's Program and Other Sermons*. The interesting thing is his dedication He wrote, "Dedication: To Friends in Kentucky, Tennessee, Florida, Louisiana." Bolin loved people, he loved preaching and he loved new challenges.

When Bolin served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge (1903-1907) he also served as chaplain of the state Senate. When Bolin Served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Lakeland (1920-1925) he led them to organize Dixieland, Southside, Webster Avenue and Rosemont. During those church starts Bolin also led the Lakeland church to upgrade improvements to the local mother church and to install a costly pipe organ.

The ministry of Bolin also included the writing, preaching and publishing of numerous topical sermons. He left three volumes of sermon briefs that included text, title, sermon synopsis and appeals from his 1927-1928 preaching. Geneva Bolin typed up some radio sermons he preached at Lakeland in 1939, these were never published. Bolin left numerous funeral sermon outlines in his funeral book but these outlines



First Baptist Church, Orlando



W. J. Bolin, 1952

were logical but very topical and sketchy.

Bolin published his Christmas sermons in monograph form from 1951-1955. They were never in one volume but the five sermons were "A Rose Garden" (1951); "The Christmas Rainbow" (1952); "The Angel's Song" (1953); "The Christmas Gift" (1954); and "The Face of Jesus" (1955).

All the notes, sermons and records produced by Bolin are of some interest but there is one notebook that is of particular interest and value.

Bolin studied at Southern seminary from 1893-1894. Dr. John Albert Broadus taught at Southern from 1859-1895. Dr. Broadus died March 16, 1895. In the Bolin collection of books there is a leather bound class note book with three handwritten words on the cover. Someone, I assume Bolin, wrote "New Testament" on the front cover and on the upper right hand side of the front cover wrote "Broadus." Inside the front cover is a nice student pencil drawing of Dr. Broadus. The first page of the notes has the title, "New Testament Interpretation." Then class notes follow in logical sequence.



First Baptist Church, Lakeland

When I handle the above personal student class notes things come to my mind. First, Bolin studied New Testament under John A. Broadus. Second, Bolin heard the Broadus lecture on Apollos for his notes are intact. Thirdly, according to A. T. Robertson the last lecture Dr. Broadus gave before he died was on Apollos.

Therefore I conclude: Bolin did not attend the last class that Broadus taught but he did attend the last full semester Broadus taught (1894). It appears he also heard the next to last time Dr. Broadus lectured on Apollos.

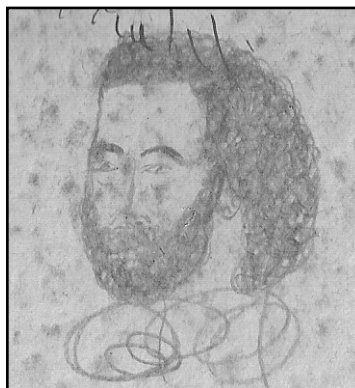
Bolin was a compassionate pastor. Bolin was an organized preacher. Bolin loved people, poetry and the preaching of sermons. I feel confident all this came from his calling. I also feel his calling was focused and sharpened by the teaching of Dr. Broadus.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

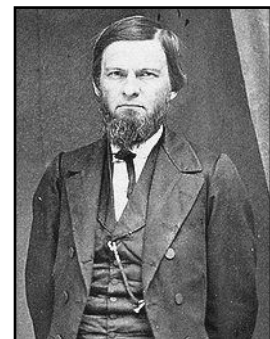


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Drawing of Dr. Broadus
by W. J. Bolin



John Broadus