

MINUTES

OF THE

EIGHTH ANNUAL SESSION

OF THE

WEST FLORIDA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH THE

UNION ACADEMY CHURCH,

JACKSON COUNTY, FLORIDA,

Oct. 21st to 24th, 1854.

TUSKEGEE, ALA:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE S. W. BAPTIST.

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OF THE WEST FLORIDA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

UNION ACADEMY CHURCH.

JACKSON COUNTY, WEST FLORIDA, *October 21st, 1854.*

The Association convened according to appointed at 11 o'clock, A. M.

The INTRODUCTORY SERMON was delivered by Elder R. WEBB, from Luke 7:22—“*To the poor the Gospel is preached.*”

After an intermission of about one hour the delegates from the Churches assembled; and the exercises were opened by singing a hymn and Elder B. S. Fuller lead in prayer.

The former Moderator, Elder Joshua Mercer conducted the business of the body. The former Clerk not present, James Drummond was appointed Clerk *pro tem.*

The LETTERS FROM THE CHURCHES were read. All appeared to be in the enjoyment of peace and harmony, and to hope for more abundant blessings of Grace hereafter.

The following officers were then duly elected:

JOSHUA MERCER, of Orange Hill, *Moderator.*

JAMES DRUMMOND, of Jackson county, *Clerk,*

WILLIAM SOREY, of Jackson county, *Treasurer.*

An opportunity was offered for Churches desiring membership with us to present their applications.

The ROCKEY CREEK CHURCH, Henry county, Ala., presented an application and was received.

Visiting Ministers who were present were invited to seats in the Association with the usual privileges.

COMMITTEES APPOINTED.

The regular Standing Committees were appointed by the Moderator, as follows:

On Preaching.—D. P. Everett, A. J. Barksdale, G. W. Underwood, C. Hartsfield, T. Barnes, Wm. Sorey, R. Webb.

On the Arrangement of Business.—R. Webb, M. B. Everett, W. L. Hatton.

On Documents.—T. Barnes, C. Hartsfield, W. W. Boykin.

On Publications.—C. Hartsfield, B. P. Barkley, T. Mercer.

On Nominations.—W. Sorey, W. Bell, A. Lanier.

On Deceased Ministers.—D. P. Everett, G. W. Underwood.

On Finance.—C. Hartsfield.

On Missions.—D. P. Everett, W. W. Boykin, A. Miller.

On Letters of Correspondence.—R. Webb, D. P. Everett, W. Harral.

Correspondence from sister Associations were called for.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.

Received the following brethren as corresponding messengers from the Associations which they represent, viz :

The Florida.—Elders B. S. Fuller and S. C. Craft.

The Salem.—Elders W. B. Weston W. M. Davis.

The Bethel.—J. Martin.

The Tuskegee.—Elders A. Van Hoose and L. T. Eubanks.

Resolved, That we receive and recognise Elder K. Hawthorn, from Pine Barren Association, as agent for the Domestic Mission Board. Also, Elder A. Van Hoose, Tuskegee, agent for the East Alabama Female College.

A Letter from the Orange Hill Sabbath School Missionary Society was received with \$11, signed by Sarah M. Everett, President; Mary E. Horne, Secretary; Bencote A. Everett, Treasurer; referred to the Committee on Documents.

Adjourned to 9 o'clock Monday morning. Prayer by Elder E. Cody.

The services were conducted at the stand by Elder B. M. Weston at 2 o'clock P. M. and by Elder Craft at night.

SABBATH EXERCISES.

OCTOBER 22nd, 1854.

Elders D. Giddens, B. S. Fuller, K. Hawthorn, E. Cody, and L. T. Eubanks, preached in the order of their names to a large and attentive congregation, and we trust the highly interesting subjects, will tell for good many days yet to come, in the bounds of this Association.

MONDAY MORNING, 9 o'clock, October 23d.

The Association convened. Prayer by Elder K. Hawthorn. The report of the committee on the arrangement of business was presented and adopted.

Received a Letter from the Colored Church at Apalachicola with \$20 for Home Missions.

Resolved, That the Letter be referred to the Committee on Documents.

Elder K. Hawthorn, agent for the Domestic Mission Board

Marion, Ala., made some remarks, after which a collection was taken amounting to \$25.

Elder A. VAN HOOSE made some remarks on the Female Baptist College at Tuskegee, Ala.

Resolved. That we are emphatically a Missionary body and that while our interest and duty are particularly involved in the support of the Domestic Mission Board at Marion, Ala., we will do all we can to aid the other boards in their benevolent operations.

Resolved, That from every point of view we regard the *East Alabama Female College*, at Tuskegee, Ala., as having claims of patronage upon us superior to any other known institution in our country.

Called for the report of the Committee on Missions which was read and adopted. [See Report A.]

MESSENGERS APPOINTED.

Messengers to Sister Associations were appointed as follows :

To the TUSKEGEE, T. Barnes, M. B. Everett, C. Hartsfield, G. W. Underwood, R. Webb, to be held Friday before the third Sabbath in September, 1855, at Union Springs, Macon county, Ala.

To the SALEM, R. Webb, D. P. Everett, J. Mercer, to be held with the Orion Church, Pike county, Ala., Saturday before the first Sabbath in October, 1855.

To the FLORIDA, J. Mercer, M. B. Everett, R. Webb, G. W. Underwood, D. P. Everett, A. J. Tippins, to be held at Concord Church, Madison county, Florida, third Lord's day in November, 1854.

To the BETHEL, Geo., R. Webb, J. Mercer, D. P. Everett, to be held at Hebron Church, Lee county, Geo., Friday before the first Sabbath in November, 1854.

To the JUDSON, J. Mercer, D. P. Everett, R. Webb, A. M. Miller, to be held at Antioch Church, Dale county, Ala., Saturday before the third Sabbath in October, 1855.

Resolved, That we board a daughter of Elder S. Rowe, at Tuskegee, Ala., for the purpose of instruction in the Female College, and a committee of three to be appointed to raise the necessary funds.

The brethren, D. P. Everett, M. B. Everett, and G. W. Woodward, committee.

The following were elected as the *Educative Committee* for the next Associational year: C. Hartsfield, T. Barnes, W. Sorey, D. P. Everett, M. B. Everett.

On motion adjourned to half past 2 o'clock. Prayer by Elder W. B. Weston.

2 1-2 O'CLOCK, P. M.

The Association convened. Prayer by Elder S. C. Craft. Called for the business Committee on Documents—report read and adopted. [See Appendix B.]

QUERIES.

Took up the query from Sardis Church relating to the annual election of Pastors.

Resolved, That we do not believe it scriptural, consequently not practicable.

Took up the query from Union Academy Church with regard to non-affiliating Baptists.

In answer to the above query, we believe it to be the duty of every Baptist to join some Church of like faith and order, and regard a member as acting improperly who, without good cause, holds a Letter while convenient to a regular orderly Baptist Church.

Resolved, That the request from the Salem Church be referred to the Executive Committee.

The next Association will convene at ORANGE HILL CHURCH on Saturday before the fourth Sabbath in October, 1855.

The Committee on Deceased Ministers presented the obituary of Elder HERMON MERCER, and adopted the same. See report.

Resolved, That we adopt the resolution in the Florida Baptist Association regarding a State Convention to be styled THE FLORIDA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION, and that the Messengers from this Association co-operate with that body on the above subject.

On motion adjourned to 9 o'clock Tuesday morning. Prayer by Bro. Underwood.

The services were conducted by Elder K. Hawthorn at 11 o'clock, A. M., by Elder Fuller at 2 o'clock, P. M., and by Elder Cody at night.

TUESDAY MORNING, 9 o'clock, Oct. 24th, 1854.

Met according to appointment. Prayer by Bro. Everett. Called the roll and noted absentees.

Called for the report of committee on the Letter from the Colored Church at Apalachicola, which was read and adopted. [See Report C.]

Called for the report of the Committee on Nominations, which was read and adopted. [See Report D.]

Called for the report of Committee on Finance, which was read and adopted. [See Report E.]

Called for the report of Committee on Publications, which was read and adopted. [See Report F.]

The report of the Executive Committee was read and adopted. [See Report G.]

The report of Elder J. Mercer, agent for the West Florida Association, was read and adopted. [See Report H.]

Resolved, That Bro. Mercer receive \$50 for his services.

The Corresponding Letter was read and adopted.

Resolved, That the Executive Committee pay Bro. Thornton for the time he has labored with us.

The report of the Treasurer was read and adopted. [See Report I.]

At the instance of Elder K. Hawthorn,

Resolved, That the Executive Committee be instructed to make reports of all their Missionary operations annually to the D. M. B. S. B. C., in view of forming a basis of representation in the Convention.

Whereas, information has just been received by this body through *The South Western Baptist* that the Baptist Literary and Theological Institution, HOWARD COLLEGE, situated at Marion in our sister State Alabama, has lately been destroyed by fire; together with all its Libraries and Apparatus, amounting in value to \$20,000 or more. Therefore,

Resolved, That we most deeply sympathise with our brethren of Alabama, in this great denominational loss which cannot fail to wound the educational cause among the Baptists of that State.

On motion adjourned to half past 2 o'clock. Prayer by Bro. Eubanks.

Elder A. Van Hoose preached in the House at 11 o'clock.

2 1-2 O'CLOCK, P. M.

The Association met. Prayer by Bro. Hawthorn.

Appointed Delegates to the Southern Baptist Convention at Montgomery, Ala., Elders J. Mercer, D. P. Everett, R. Webb.

Resolved, That we renew our Union Meetings at *Econfina*, fifth Sabbath in May. *W. District*.

Rocky Creek.—Second Sabbath after the fifth.

Resolved, That the Book Concern be placed in the hands of the Executive Committee and they be authorized to increase it.

The Committee on Nominations report that Elder D. P. EVERETT preach the next *Introductory Sermon*. Elder R. WEBB, to preach the *Missionary Sermon*.

The following resolutions closed the business.

Resolved, That the Clerk have 500 copies of the Minutes printed at Tuskegee, Ala., and have \$20 for his services.

The following resolution was introduced by Elder D. P. Everett:

Resolved, That the thanks of this body are due and are

hereby tendered to the Church and community for the ample and hospitable manner in which the present session of this body has been accommodated.

A hymn was sung, the parting hand extended and God's blessings invoked.

JOSHUA MERCER, *Moderator.*

JAMES DRUMMOND, *Clerk.*

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

THE WEST FLORIDA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION TO ALL OTHERS WITH WHOM SHE CORRESPONDS :

Dear Brethren—By the divine favor we have been permitted to hold our eighth Annual Session, which has been a very pleasant, harmonious and busy one. We have had the pleasure of meeting more of our visiting brethren than usual; your bodies have all been ably represented, for which we sincerely thank you. We trust that through the blessings of God, good has been accomplished by their labors among us, our hearts and hands have been strengthened by their presence and counsels. You know brethren we are a feeble band, having a large and thinly settled field to operate in, and but few laborers; but we trust in an Almighty arm. Truth is mighty and will prevail, and our cause is God's and truth. Hoping that you will still continue to favor us as you have done this year, we remain, dear brethren, your affectionate and grateful fellow laborer's in the work of the Lord.

JOSHUA MERCER, *Moderator.*

APPENDIX.

REPORT A. On Missions.

The Missionary enterprise is not of modern origin. It is coeval with our holy Christianity. It has Jesus Christ for its founder; and the commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature," together with the teachings and practice of the Apostles, and their successors constitute our authority for endeavoring in this way to promote the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. Your committee are well aware that some regard the sending out of Judson and others, as Missionaries to Burmah, as the commencement of this great enterprise. Thus you will hear them saying in a boastful spirit, that the Missionary Baptists are of modern origin—that they are only some forty years old, and that they belong to the old, Primitive Baptist order.

Your committee commend such to your compassion, rather than your contempt. They know not whereof they affirm. It shows a supreme ignorance of both the Bible and history of the denomination to which they belong. They are wholly ignorant that our brethren in England, from whom we sprung were actively engaged in Missionary operations long before this time.

Your committee cannot forbear introducing some items of history upon this subject. More than two hundred years ago, we find our brethren in England assembled in a large Association at Avergaveny. On the third day of their session they unanimously passed the following resolution:

Resolved, That by sending out and supporting Missionaries, as we did before the days of our persecution, we will receive the ancient order of things."

Mark the language of this resolution. They were just emerging from a long and painful persecution, and in this resolution they declare what was their practice before their persecution, and declare also that that practice was the ancient order of things in the church. This was to be Missionaries both in theory and practice; it was to send out and support Missionaries to preach to the destitute. Our brethren then in England, from whom we sprung, and before we had an existence in America, were Missionaries in the fullest sense of that word.

The Philadelphia, Charleston and General Association of Virginia were the first organized Associations in America. These retained and perpetua-

STATISTICAL TABLE.

Churches.	Names of Delegates.	Baptized	Received	Dismiss'd	Exclud'd	Deceased	Total.	For Minutes	Purposes	Missionary
Union Academy	R. Webb, T. Barnes, W. Sorey, C. N. Hartsfield	1	22	4	0	0	70	3.00	18.50	
Salem	W. A. Bell	0	0	2	0	0	15	1.50	4.00	
Bethlehem	J. Drummond, W. W. Boykin, B. T. Barkly, N. Miller	3	4	3	0	0	59	3.00	19.50	
Orange Hill	J. Mercer, D. P. Everett, G. W. Underwood, M. B. Everett	5	4	4	0	3	81	3.00	15.00	
Holmes Spring	No Delegation	0	0	2	0	0	27	0.00	25.00	
Apalachicola	" " [Hatton]	3	0	1	7	2	22	1.50	2.50	
Big Spring	P. Taylor, T. R. Mercer, W. L. A. J. Barksdale, L. Patterson, R. W. Harrel	1	2	4	6	1	35	0.00	2.00	
Sardis	" " [livan]	5	3	3	7	0	59	2.00	6.55	
N. Providence	J. T. Webb, G. Sullivan S. Sul-	5	5	1	0	1	44	1.00	5.00	
Econfina	A. J. Tippins	0	2	2	0	0	10	0.00	3.35	
Rockey Creek	W. F. Harrison, E. Godfrey	0	0	0	0	0	8	0.00	5.00	
Antioch	J. B. Talley	0	1	6	0	0	5	0.75		
Bethel	Not represented, last years report						6			
Holmes Valley	" " " " " "						20			
Liberty Hill	" " " " " "						15			
Harmony	" " " " " "						7			
Alaqua	" " " " " "						10			

ADDITIONS.—Baptized, 23; Received by Letter, 43; Dismissed by Letter, 32; Excluded, 20; Deceased, 7; Total, 493; For Minutes, \$15 75; Missionary purposes, \$104 40.

OBITUARY.

While we praise God for the exceeding health enjoyed within our bounds during the past Associational year, we are called upon to mourn the loss of one of our fathers in the ministry and regard it a duty, as well as a privilege, to present the following

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE LIFE OF

REV. HERMON MERCER,

which must fall below what was anticipated on account of a failure to obtain the necessary information sought by correspondence with those better acquainted with his history than the writer.

He was the third son of Rev. Silas Mercer, and brother of Rev. Jesse Mercer, D. D., and born in 1784. He was baptized just before his first marriage, with Elizabeth Andrews, while a resident of Wilkes county, Ga. After being blessed with six children by this marriage, death sundered the conjugal tie, and soon afterwards he was married to Mary Battle, by whom he had three children—two of which died in infancy. His third marriage was with Mrs. Elizabeth Terrel, a lady of great purity, and a large life-time estate. Under the mysterious, yet ever wise and gracious dispensation of Providence, he was called with great lamentation in 1837 to consign his third wife to the silent grave, during whose life time he resided in the town of Crawfordville, in the laying out of which he acted as Surveyor, and by his active enterprising habits, his moral, mental and pecuniary influence, he contributed much towards the rapid growth of that far famed Village.

Soon after the death of his wife he moved to Albany, Baker county, Ga., and though with diminished property, and a heart subdued by trouble's pangs, his native energy and enterprising disposition impelled him to works promising profit to himself and benefit to the community. A Steam Mill was his first grand project which in a few days after its completion was totally destroyed by fire. He rebuilt on the same ground, and strange to note, this noble work was just ready for successful operation when it was swept away by the memorable "Harrison Freshet." In connection with his son, Wm. A. Mercer, he then built another Steam Mill half mile from the river, but his pecuniary embarrassments, by such a succession of misfortunes, compelled him to give up his earthly possessions and submit to the bitter restraints of poverty.

But the wisdom and goodness of God were manifest. He became a more devoted Christian; his soul was fired by the love of Christ, his heart melted in contemplating the moral wretchedness of his fellow beings. Having been ordained to the Ministry since his residence at Albany, his "works of faith and labors of love" for the Lord, were characterized by the zeal and energy of his nature, Churches were built up and many a sinner made to tremble under his sympathetic, affectionate and earnest ministrations. The Asthma, with which he had been long afflicted, began now to disqualify him for his holy calling and arduous duties, and for relief he migrated to the beautiful and healthful Bay of St. Andrews, in West Florida.