MINUTES

OF THE

ELGHTH ANNUAL SESSION

OF THE

WEST FLORIDA BAPTIST ASSOCIATON,

SELD WITH THE

UNION ACADEMY CHURCH,

JACKSON COUNTY, FLORIDA,

Oct. 21st to 24th, 1854.

TUSKEGEE, AM:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE SAW. BAPTIST.

1854.

JOHN B. STETSON UNIVERSITY

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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.

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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. HAW-THORN, 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 Apalachi-

cola with \$20 for Home Missions.

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

Elder K. HAWTHORN, agent for the Domestic Mission Boar

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.

Reso'ved, 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 In-

stitution 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 Septembor, 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 Jupson, 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 refered 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. Thorn-

ton 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 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 strenghtened 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, Modetor.

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 brethers 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-

ted this peculiar feature fof their ancestors. These in their town sent out and supported Missionaries to preach to the destitute. These appointed days, preached sermons on the subject of Missions and took up collections for the support of Missions, and then sent out agents to collect funds to sustain those who were sent to the destitute. Thus we, the regular, the Apostolic Baptists of the United States are still doing; we still possess the family likeness in this, as in other respects; we are still sending out and supporting Missionaries, as was the ancient order of things in the church.--Where, then, your committee would ask, are the first traces of anteism ?--They are not found in the New Testament, nor are they found in church history. Where, then, where? and the echo answers where? We find not a single trace of them until we come to Joshua Lawrence, of North Carolina, less than a half century ago. What! the old, the Primitive Baptists not more than fifty years old? It is even so. Nay, we will take that back .--They are as old as the christian era; but the secret is this: The old, the Primitive Baptists are those who are now called the Missionary Baptists, and not those who have abandoned the faith once delivered to the saints, and disregarded the very commission under which they profess to be operating ..

Thus much for the antiquity of Missions.

At the present our Missionary operations are conducted principally by three Boards: our Board of Foreign Missions is located at Richmond, Va., and has for its field at present, China and Africa. Our Indian Mission Board is located at Louisville, Ky., and Domestic Mission Board at Marion Ala. These Boards are all more or less embarrassed for want of funds, and your committee feel that they cannot too strongly urge upon this Association to do all that it can in sustaining these Boards in their benevolent and praiseworthy efforts to send the gospel to the destitute.

D. P. EVERRETT, Chairman.

On Documents.

We find in the letter from Sardis Church, a query, relating to the annual election of Pastors. And one from Union Academy Church, with regard to non-affiliating Baptists. There is a request from the Salem Church for aid to sustain Pastoral care over them; and a request from the Orange Hill Church that the next Association be held with them. The subject of a State Convention alluded to in the Florida Minutes, we think demands the consideration of this body.

With regard to the letter from the Orange Hill Sabbath School Missionary Society, specially referred to us, we respectfully submit the following:

Resolved: That we heartily thank that Society for this contribution, and commend their noble example as worthy the imitation of all our churches.

THOMAS BARNES, Chairman.

REPORT C.

The committee to whom was referred the LETTER from the colored members of the Apalachicola Church, respectfully submit the following

Report: We do not regard the colored portion of the Church formally a branch, but only as constituting a part of the Apalachicola Church; yet owing to their great disproportion of members and means, and in view of the intelligence and piety they manifest, we approve of their holding separate conferences and transacting such business as belongs peculiarly to themselves, yet always under the supervision of the white brethren, one of whom should act as Moderator. We would also advise that the colored portion of the church keep a separate account of all their benevolent contributions which with the amount they send up to the Association, may be stated in their regular church letter, or be presented through some white brother, whom they may choose, that the result of their efforts may appear in our Minutes.

THOMAS BARNES, Chairman.

REPORT D. On Nominations.

Your committee on Nominations would respectfully report :

That the next Introductory Sermon be delivered by Elder D. P. Everrett, and the Missionary Sermon by Elder R. Webb—which appointments we ask your body to confirm.

W. SOREY, Chairman.

REPORT E.

On Finance.

The Financial Committee submit the following report:	
For Minutes, : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :	75
For Home Missions, : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :	85
For Foreign Missions, : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :	
For C. African Mission, : : : : : : 8	45
For ditte, by collection of Sardis Church, : : : : 1	10
For Associational Purposes, : : : : : : 30	22
From Orange Hill S. S. M. S. and Church, : : : : 29	00
Collection on Sabbath by whites, : : : : : 54	
" " " blacks, : : : : : 9	05
TOTAL, : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :	90
All of which we have turned over to your Treasurer.	Œ.
Received since from Apalachicola Church for Minutes, : : \$ 1	50
" " Missions, : : ; 2	50
Respectfully submitted. C. N. HARTSFIELD, Chairman	

REPORT F.

On Publications.

Your committee for the benefit of their brethren, would recommend them to subscribe for and prayerfully read the South Western Baptist, printed at Tuskegee, Ala., at the low price of two dollars per year. It is ably edited by the brethren Henderson & Watt, two able Baptist ministers, who are sound in the faith. The Christian Index, printed at Penfield, Ga., is a valuable paper, and the oldest religious paper published in the Union. We

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would farther say to our brethren, that the Southern Baptist Publication Society keeps constantly on hand a supply of good denominational books.

C. N. HARTSFIELD, Chairman.

REPORT G.

Executive Committee.

Your committee finding it out of their power to obtain a suitable minister to settle in Holmes or Walton county, according to your instruction, defermined, on the 5th of November, to send Rev. M. Westmoreland to labor in that part of your bounds. He reports to have traveled 3361 miles, served 245 days and preached 87 times. On 10th December we appointed Rev. J. R. Haggard to labor one half of his time in the lower parts of Jackson and adjoining portions of Washington. His report up to 15th March, when he left us, is: traveled 504 miles, preached 22 times, delivered 11 exhortations and made 30 religious visits. For his service according to our contract, we paid him \$18.75. On 31st January we employed Rev. R. Webb for three-fourths of his time to labor in the field between Woodville and Rocky Creek, and downwards, embracing Mt. Pisgah and New Providence-the Union Academy Church paying him for service one-fourth of his time. He reports as follows: preached 132 times as Missionary, baptized 12 persons, aided in constituting 1 church, traveled 1666 miles, and lost two weeks by sickness. Circumstances requiring Rev. M. Westmoreland to leave our bounds, on the 3d of June, Bro. C. L. Thornton having come down among us and commenced preaching, we requested him to continue service in the field vacated by Bro. Westmoreland, which he hid, reporting as having traveled 1204 miles, preached 70 times, received by experience for baptism, 9 persons and collected \$25 for Missions; and according to our agreement, we recommend him to your liberality for remuneration.

Your committee had subject to their control only \$178.82, of which they have paid out \$168.75

The brethren employed as Missionaries all agree in ther reports, that the people in their respective fields are thinly settled, and unable of themselves to sustain ministers to preach for them. We have no preacher in Franklin, Holmes, or Walton counties and except a few neighborhoods, our whole bounds are one great field of religious destitution, so far as our own denomination is concerned.

C. N. HARTSFIELD, Chairman.

REPORT H.

Rev. J. Mercer's Report.

OCTOBER 21st, 1854.—The Agent of the West Florida Association begs leave to report: That your Agent is of the opinion that if any person could be obtained that would travel and preach to all the Churches, and among the friends of the Baptists of this Association, the Churches and friends of our Mission. would in time to come, be fully sustained. Your Agent has referred this subject to those Churches to whom he preaches, the result of which you have seen in the response they gave you in their letters.

Your Agent visited the Associations in Alabama as usual; the Tuskegee are encumbered with many things, all requiring money; their College in debt, their Mission to the Blacks, their Missions Foreign and Domestic, are pressing their claims upon them insomuch that they have referred their West Florida Mission to the Domestic Mission Board at Marion. The Liberty Association has corrected the error by which their contributions failed to reach its destination.

The Salem Association divided to form a new one, and in the multitude of business and cares their donation was overlooked till too late to call it up. Bro. Jesse M. Jackson, a brother of Chambers county, Ala., proposes to put it in the power of your Agent to offer your Executive Committee fifty dollars by the month of January next. Your Agent would recommend your body, to look more to its own resources and betake to more fervent prayer and more energetic action for future success.

Submitted respectfully, Joshra Mercer, Agent.

REPORT J.

Treasurers Report.

WILLIAM TIST AS	SORRY	TT3					rt.							
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STATISTICAL TABLE.

Churches.	Names of Delegates.	Baptize	Receive	Dismis'	Exclud	Decease	Total	Minute	Purposes.
Union Acade'y	R. Webb, T Barnes W C.	10	0	0	0	2		7	000
Salem	R. Webb, T. Barnes, W. Sorey, C. N. Hartsfield W. A. Bell J. Drummond, W. W. Boykin, B. T, Barkly, N. Miller	.1	22 ·0	.4	.0	.0	70	3.00	18.50
Orange Hill	J. Mercor D D D D	1 . 10		. 14	. 0	. U .	031	3.00	19 50
Holmes Spring	Underwood, M. B. Everett.	.5	4	4	. 0	3	81	2 00	15 00
Sardis	P. Taylor, T. R. Mercer, W. L.	.1	2	4	6	1 3	35 0	.50	2.50
N. Providence	W. Harrel	.5	3	3	7	0 5	9 2	00	6 55
Kockey Creek.	V. F. Harrison, E. Godfry	0	6	2 .	0 .	0.1	0.0	.00	.3.35
Holmes Valley	ot represented, last years report		1:	0		0	6	. 75	
larmony					.1.	1/	5	1	
Maqua	""		1:	1	1	110	7		

Appirions.—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 in formation sought by correspondence with those better ac-

quainted 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 Flori-

da.