

MINUTES

OF THE

Ninth Annual Session

OF THE

WEST FLORIDA ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH THE

CHURCH AT ORANGE HILL

On the 27th, 29th and 30th of October,

1855

Callahassee:

OFFICE OF THE FLORIDA SENTINEL.

PRINTED BY BENJ. F. ALLEN.

1855.

SAMPSON LIBRARY
JOHN B. STETSON UNIVERSITY
DeLAND FLORIDA

MINUTES

minutes

OF THE

1855

Ninth Annual Session

OF THE

West Florida Association,

HELD WITH THE

CHURCH AT ORANGE HILL

On the 27th, 29th and 30th of October,

1855

Callahassee:

OFFICE OF THE FLORIDA SENTINEL.

PRINTED BY BENJ. F. ALLEN.

1855.

MINUTES.

1. The introductory sermon was preached by brother Wm. M. Davis, from the 12th chap. and 26th verse of John's Gospel: "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

2. After preaching at the stand and some refreshments, the Association assembled in the meeting house, and organized by singing and prayer. Prayer by brother John Davis.

3. The former Clerk being absent, brother Stephen Rowe was appointed Clerk *pro tem*.

4. Called for and read letters from the churches.

5. Elected brother Joshua Mercer, Moderator, and bro. Stephen, Rowe Clerk.

6. Appointed the following committees, namely: To Arrange Preaching—T. R. Mercer, John Wooten, D. P. Everett and M. T. Embrey. To Arrange Business—C. N. Hartsfield, Wm. M. Davis and Wm. Sorey. On Documents—B. F. Hattan, Henry Clark and A. J. Tippins. On Nominations—G. W. Underwood, John Evans and Joshua Howard. On Finance—M. B. Everett, Green Hartsfield and W. P. L. Horn.

7. Brother John Davis from Ala. is appointed at the stand this evening, and brother Wm. Borum to-night.

8. Brother Richard Webb is appointed to preach the missionary sermon to-morrow at 11 o'clock, and brother Cary C. Willis, from the Columbus Association, to preach in the afternoon.

9. Called for correspondence from sister Associations, but none received.

10. The brethren P. M. Callaway and Dr. W. M. C. Westmoreland, from the Eufala Association, being present on a voluntary visit, were, on motion, invited to seats with us and recognized as messengers from that body. The invitation was accepted.

11. Called for letters from newly constituted churches, but none were presented.

12. Invited ministers of our faith and order, but not of this body, to seats with us. The brethren, John Davis, from Ala., Richard Webb, from Bainbridge, Geo., and Cary C. Willis, from the Columbus Association, Geo., present.

13. Adjourned to half past 8 o'clock on Monday morning. Prayer by brother R. Laurence.

SABBATH, Oct. 28th.

An interesting company assembled at the pool at half past 8 o'clock, to witness the administration of the sacred ordinance of baptism.

After the morning services, the congregation convened at the stand, when the brethren preached, according to appointment, to a solemn and attentive audience, and we hope to good effect. The missionary sermon was preached from the 3rd Epistle of John and 8th verse: "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth."

Thirty-three dollars and 83 cents were collected at the stand for missions.

Brother Wm. M. Davis preached at night, followed in exhortation by brother P. M. Callaway.

The closing exercises of the day, and also of the night, were highly interesting. Christians were refreshed, and many who claimed no hope appeared to be sensible of their lost condition. May God increase and perfect the good work.

MONDAY, Oct. 29th.

1. Met according to adjournment. Prayer by brother W. P. Ketchand.
2. Read, corrected and approved the minutes of the two past days.
3. Called for the report of the Committee on Business, which was read and adopted.
4. Appointed the following committees, namely: On Publications—Wm. Butler, D. P. Everett and Green Hartsfield. On the State of the Churches—Wm. M. Davis, M. B. Everett and G. W. Underwood.
5. Called for petitionary letters, when a letter from the newly constituted church at Pleasant Grove, Henry county, Ala., was presented and read, and the church received into connection with this body.
6. A letter from the colored portion of the church at Apalachicola was received and read, containing a contribution of seven dollars for missions, and one dollar and seventy-five cents for minutes, and requesting ministerial aid.
7. Appointed corresponding messengers to sister Associations as

follows, namely: The Florida, fifteen miles north of Tallahassee, Friday before the 3rd Sabbath in Nov.—Joshua Mercer, G. W. Underwood and D. P. Everett. The Salem, Ala.—Joshua Mercer, M. B. Everett. The Tuskegee, at Pine Level, Friday before the 3rd Sabbath in Sept.—Joshua Mercer, Wm. M. Davis and D. P. Everett. The Eufala, Ala.—Wm. M. Davis, C. N. Hartsfield and D. P. Everett. The Judson, Ala., Saturday before the 3d Sabbath in Oct.—T. R. Mercer, W. P. Ketchand and Joshua Mercer.

8. The Committee on Documents reports a request from the New Providence Church to restore brother T. L. Handsford to his former stand as a minister; also a query from the Bethlehem Church; and a petition for the next Association; and a query from Sardis Church; and also a petition for the next Association.

9. Took up the request from New Providence Church to restore brother Handsford to the ministry, and, on motion, agreed to appoint a committee to investigate the matter, confer with the church and afford any advice and assistance which they, in their discretion, may deem necessary. Committee—D. P. Everett, S. Rowe, W. P. Ketchand, Wm. Butler and G. W. Underwood; and, on motion, added to the above committee the following brethren, namely: Joshua Mercer, C. N. Hartsfield, and Wm. M. Davis. Alternates—M. B. Everett, T. Barnes and Wm. Hartsfield.

10. The query from the Bethlehem Church was withdrawn by her delegates.

11. Appointed the next Association to be held with the church at Sardis Saturday before the 4th Sabbath in October next.

12. The query from Sardis was withdrawn by her delegates.

13. The Committee on Nominations appointed brother Joshua Mercer to preach the next introductory sermon, and brother D. P. Everett the next missionary sermon.

14. Called for the Report of the Executive Committee, which was read and adopted, [See Appendix, Letter A.]

15. Brother John Davis is appointed to preach at the stand this evening.

16. Adjourned to hear preaching.

17. After a sermon by brother R. Webb, and some refreshments, the Association again convened for business.

18. Brother D. P. Everett delivered an address on the subject of supplying our destitution, and proposed to raise an amount of subscription, payable at our next session—whereupon the sum by two

hundred and eighty dollars were raised by individual subscription, thirty-nine dollars of the same being paid in advance. The following resolution, offered by brother Wm. M. Davis, was then read and adopted, viz :

Resolved, That this body urge upon the churches the necessity of at once supporting our domestic mission cause by pledges, to be paid at the next session of the body.

19. Received and read an interesting letter from the Orange Hill S. S. Missionary Society, presenting a contribution of twelve dollars and thirty-five cents for missionary purposes—whereupon the following resolution, offered by brother Wm. M. Davis, was read and adopted, viz :

Resolved, That this body tender its sincere thanks to the Sabbath School Missionary Society at Orange Hill, for their kind and constant co-operation with us in the cause of missions.

20. Called for the Report of the Finance Committee, which was read and adopted. [Letter B.]

21. Elected the following brethren, delegates to the Baptist State Convention of Florida, to be held at Greenwood, Jackson county, commencing Friday before the 1st Sabbath in December, namely: Joshua Mercer, W. P. Ketchand, D. P. Everet, Stephen Rowe, Wm. M. Davis, Thomas Barnes, C. N. Hartsfield, M. B. Everett, G. W. Underwood and Green Hartsfield. Alternates—Wm. Sorey and R. Laurence.

22. Elected by move and second, Brother Wm. Sorey, Treasurer and the following brethren ex-committee (namely) C. N. Hartsfield, Wm. Sorey, T. Barnes, D. P. Everett, B. F. Hattan, Wm. M. Davis and W. P. L. Horn.

23. Adjourned to 9 o'clock to-morrow morning, Prayer by brother Underwood.

TUESDAY, Oct., 30th.

1. Met according to adjournment, Prayer by brother John Davis.
2. Read, corrected and approved the minutes of yesterday.
3. Took up a collection for the convention; seventeen dollars were raised by voluntary contribution. The following Resolution was then read and adopted, viz :

Resolved, That we request the Delegates to lay the subject before their respective Churches, and endeavor to make further collections to be sent up to the convention at Greenwood.

4. Called for the report of the committee on the state of the Churches, which was read and adopted (Letter C.)

5. Called for the Treasurers Report, which was read and adopted.—Letter D.

6. Called for the Corresponding Letter which was read and adopted.

7. Suspended the order of business to hear an address by brother J. Mercer, on the subject of the revision of the Bible.

8. After an interesting address by brother Mercer, the following preamble and resolutions offered by brother D. P. Everett, were read and adopted, viz : according to previous notice, and the hearty approbation of this body, Rev. J. Mercer delivered an address on the great importance and immediate necessity of revising King James's translation of the Holy Scriptures; and on motion *Resolved*, that the arguments in favor of such revision, seem to be numerous and conclusive.

9. [The report of committee on publications was over looked.—CLERK.]

10. The following resolution offered by brother D. P. Everett, was read and adopted :

Resolved, That we are truly gratified to notice the continued and increasing prosperity of the E. Al. Female College, situated at Tuskegee, and feel more than ever inclined to recommend that noble Institution as *the place* for a thorough, practical and accomplished education.

11. *Resolved*, That the clerk have six hundred copies of these minutes printed, and distributed, and that he have twenty dollars for his services.

12. *Resolved*, That the thanks of this body, are due, and are hereby tendered to the members of this church, for the kind and hospitable manner in which they have entertained us, during our stay with them.

13. The Association having finished its business, came to order, and brother R. Webb, delivered a very interesting and impressive farewell Sermon.

14. Adjourned to the time and place, aforementioned, and closed by taking the parting hand. Prayer by brother John Davis.

JOSHUA MERCER, *Moderator*.

STEPHEN ROWE, *Clerk*.

Corresponding Letter of the West Florida Baptist Association.

The West Florida Baptist Association, to her sister Associations, sendeth Christian salutation.

DEAR BRETHREN: We have just passed through our *ninth* annual meeting, and are able to render a tribute of thanksgiving to God, for the manifestation of His presence among us. It is a source of regret with us, that so few of our brethren from a distance have attended our Session just passed. With sorrow, we record the fact, that *none* of our neighboring Associate bodies have been regularly represented at our sitting. Dear brethren, for the future we affectionately request that you remember us, and that you fail not to visit us. The cause of Christ within our boundaries, is in a languishing state; but our prospects are cheered by the glimmerings of reviving hope, and we live in constant anticipation of the period when we shall be able to say, "surely the Lord dwelleth in our midst." We hope, dear brethren, at our next yearly meeting to see many of you, and with you to mingle in the service of our exalted Saviour.

JOSHUA MERCER, *Moderator.*

STEPHEN ROWE, *Clerk.*



STATISTICS OF THE CHURCHES.

Churches & Counties. Post Offices.	Pastors.	Clerks.	Names of Delegates.	Baptised.	Rec'd by let.	Restored.	Dismissed.	Excomu'ted.	Deceased.	Total in fell.	M. meet'gs.
FIRST DISTRICT											
Greenwood, Jackson.....	W. M. Davis,	C. N. Hartsheld,	W. M. Davis, G. & C. N. Hartsheld, W. Sorey, W. Butler,	722	9	2	3	1	177	177	1
Big Spring, Henry, Al.....	Z. Nix,	W. L. Hatton,	T. R. Mercer, B. F. Hatton,	292	2	1	1	5	140	140	2
Sardis, Jackson.....	Stephen Rowe,	John Bird,	Stephen Rowe, John Darby,	5	5	1	1	1	55	55	2
Chattahoochee, Gadsden.....	R. Webb,	John Woolen,	John Woolen,	4	4	10	3	3	10	24	3
New Providence, Jackson.....	Stephen Rowe,	H. Clark,	I. O. Magrore, T. L. Hansford, Henry Clark,								
Pleasant Grove, Henry, Al.....	W. P. Ketchand,	J. B. Everett,	W. P. Ketchand, Wm. McGriff,								
Apalachicola, Franklin.....	none.	"	A letter was received from Col'd part of this church but no del'n.								
Amloch, Jackson.....	none.	"	Not Represented.								
Mr. Pisgah, Gadsden.....	O. McKeeun,	J. A. Boykin,	"								
SECOND DISTRICT											
Orange Hill, Washington.....	D. P. Everett,	H. C. Briggs,	J. Mercer, D. P. Everett, M. B. Everett, G. W. Underwood,	3	3	2	6	1	75	75	3
Holmes' Valley, Walton.....	"	"	John Nelson, John Evans. No Satisfies returned.	4	4	3	2	3	20	20	3
Bethlehem, Jackson.....	W. M. Davis,	N. W. Miller,	Benjamin P. Barkley,								
Ecotina, Washington.....	"	A. J. Tipples,	A. J. Tipples,								
Salem, Jackson.....	"	Wm. A. Bell,	Joshua Howard,								
Holmes' Creek, Jackson.....	"	"	Not Represented.								
Harmony.....	"	"	"								
New Hope.....	"	"	"								
Liberty Hill.....	"	"	"								
Alagna.....	"	"	"								

RECAPITULATION—Baptized 18—Received by letter 40—Restored 2—Dismissed 23—Excommunicated 18—Dead 8—Ordained Ministers 6—Licensates 2—Whole number of Communicants 597. The names of Ordained Ministers in SMALL CAPITALS. Licensates in Italics.

The Sums total of unrepresented Churches are taken from an old Minute.

APPENDIX

A.

Your committee respectfully submit the following report :

After your last Session, they endeavored to raise funds to settle one efficient Minister West of the Chattahoochee River, but failed.

For the want of funds we have been unable to render the Salem Church any assistance. The deficiency of funds rendered us unable to effect any thing until the first of April. Brother S. Rowe, having taken a school in the neighborhood of Sardis Church, we then secured his services, for the neighboring Churches of Mt. Pisgah and New Providence, and to preach at some Station discretionary with himself, reserving one Sabbath for the benefit of Sardis Church.

Owing to affliction, our Missionary was unable to render the amount of services he otherwise would have done. He reports as travelled 486 miles, Preached 37 Sermons, delivered 3 Exhortations, besides sundry other religious services. He has also sold \$15 10 worth of books, and given away \$2 70 worth of tracts and other small books, for which we have paid him one hundred dollars.

We beg leave to direct your attention to the almost entire destitution of Franklin, Calhoun, Walton and Holmes counties, with a population of over 7000 souls, there are but a very few Baptists, but those small bands of Christians cry loudly in the Macedonian tone. Among them are several Churches without Pastors. Truly the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few.—Brethren cannot we earnestly pray in faith, to the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

C. N. HARTSFIELD Ch'n.

B.

The Financial Committee beg leave to report :

CONTRIBUTIONS.

CHURCHES AND COUNTIES.	For Minutes.	For Domestic Missions.	Foreign Missions.	Association purposes.	C. African Mission.
Pleasant Grove, Henry, Al.,....	\$1,00			\$2 75	
Sardis, Jackson,.....	1,50	\$5 40			\$1 10
New Providence, Jackson,.....	1,00				
Salem, Jackson,.....	50	1 00			
Holmes Valley,.....	1,00			4 00	
Greenwood, Jackson,.....	3,00	9 70*			
Bethlehem, Jackson,.....	3,00			3 25	
Big Spring,.....	2,00				
Econfina, Washington,.....	1,00				
Apalachicola, Franklin,.....	1,75	7 00			
Chattahoochee, Gadsden,.....	2,00				
Orange Hill, Washington,.....	3,00			17 45	
Aggregate,.....	\$20,75	\$23,10		\$27,45	\$1 00
					—\$72 40

*And \$25, payable 1st Jan'y.

Collected on Sabbath for missions,	\$33 83
Received from S. S. Missionary Society, at Orange Hill,	12 35
Cash paid on subscription for D. Missions,	20 00

Final amount, \$138 58

All of which we have paid over to the Treasurer.

RECAPITULATION.—Sent up by the churches for Minutes, \$20 75; for Domestic Missions, \$23 10; Association purposes, \$27 45; Central African Missions, \$1 10; from Sabbath School So., O. H., \$12 35; collected on Sabbath, \$33 83; cash paid on sub., \$20 00. Sum total, \$138 58.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

M. B. EVERETT, Chairman.

C.

The Committee on the state of Religion, submitted the following as their report :

Of Orange Hill, it may be said, that though a comparatively weak Church, yet through the *constant* effort of its few *active* members, the light of this Church shines as a light in a dark place, and the spirit of the Lord dwells in her midst.

The example of *this* body, we recommend all the Churches in the Association to follow.

Of Chatahochee, it may be said she hath some strength yet remaining, but her members seem inclined to rest in quietude, assured that the *Lord* will bring in a better day by and by.

To the Saints of this church, we say, "brethren wake up, and remember that the day is far spent, and the night is at hand."

Apalachicola is nearly dead. Her white members are confused and scattered like sheep on the mountains without a shepherd, while her colored member-ship, struggling under intestine troubles, and almost starving for lack of spiritual guidance, calls loudly in our ears for help.

Brethren let not the cries of Apalachicola fall unheeded on our ears.

Econfina sits as a lonely star in the midst of a region of surrounding gloom; but her light, borrowed from the Sun of righteousness, penetrates that encircling darkness, and reveals the presence of God in her midst. May the blessed God ever direct the destiny of this little vine.

Big Spring has had a refreshing from Divine presence, and her lamp is glowing with increasing brilliancy. So may she ever thrive.

Bethlehem claims some precious souls within her borders, but she is compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, and her foes watch over her progress with an eye of jealousy. She needs firmness, decision, increased zeal, and the directive grace of God.—May the Holy Spirit shine upon this little body of Saints, and light them onward to the Celestial City.

Holmes Valley, is doing tolerably well. May the Prince of life grant her health, and life, and vigor, since all her health must come from Him.

Salem and Sardis, are afflicted with a deep chilliness, and the powers of darkness seem almost ready to prevail over them. Brethren pray for their prosperity.

Pleasant Grove, just planted, has before her a great work. May the author of all grace grant her power to go up and possess the land on her borders.

New Providence, desperately mangled by internal dissension, is left in solitude to groan, threatening without timely aid to expire in solitary wretchedness. May God heal her deadly wounds ere the fatal hour that seals her doom.

Greenwood has her seat in the midst of a goodly heritage, and has great reason to bless the Lord. Her members are, in part, found in their places around the camp, but their armor has grown rusty from lack of use. Maintaining rather a decided position of defence, her communicants seem satisfied to take no measures for the aggressive. May the day soon come when Greenwood shall burnish her armor, and go forth conquering and to conquer. Her position is most responsible, and the labor before her is very great.

It will be seen that the Churches within our bounds are poor, destitute and suffering, from the deepest spiritual dearth. As a reason for this deplorable state of the Churches, may be mentioned the nature of the communities where they are situated, being for the most part poor, isolated, and made up of uncultivated persons, and the scarcity of ministers within the limits of our territory.

We number but four Ordained Ministers within our entire bounds. There is another Ordained Minister, who though disabled by disease, yet labors in Sabbath Schools and Churches, so far as he is able. In consequence of the great scarcity of preachers, many of

our Churches are without preaching. The state of religion among us calls most loudly for our prayers, our labors, and our means.

WM. M. DAVIS, Chairman.

D.

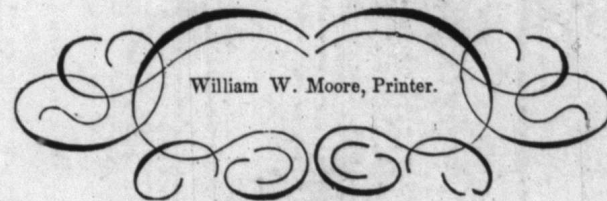
The Treasurer begs leave to report:

<i>Wm. Sorey in Acct. with the W. F. Association,</i>	<i>Dr.</i>
1854.	
Oct. 24.—Rec'd of Financial Committee,	\$189.72
Rec'd after Report was made,	4.00
“ 25—Rec'd of C. S. Thornton as Missionary,	25.00
“ “ Rec'd of Book Concern of the W. F. Association,	19.00
Dec. 5.—Rec'd D. P. Everett's Receipt,	66.95
1855.	
Mch. 8.—Rec'd of Rev. J. Mercer, Agent of this Association, through T. Barnes,	11.00
April 25.—Rec'd of Rev. J. Mercer, Agent for this Association,	50.00
Oct. 29.—Received from financial Committee,	138.58
“ Since by Mr. Jaurdan,	5.00
“ In part of contribution,	7.00
Rec'd. of Mr. R. Sharpe for Missions,	10.00
“ of Rev. Stephen Rowe for books sold,	15.10
	<hr/> 542.15
1854.	CR.
Oct. 25.—By cash paid C. S. Thornton,	\$40.65
Nov. 4.—By cash paid Rev. J. Mercer, Agt. by ord of the Association,	50.00
1855.	
Feb. 21.—By cash paid Minutes,	32.00
“ “ paid Clerk,	20.00

July, 2.—By cash pd. Rev. Stephen Rowe,	50,00
Oct. 29.—By cash pd. Rev. Stephen Rowe,	50,00

Amt.	242.65
------	--------

Leaving a balance on hand of	\$299.50
WM. SOREY, <i>Treasurer.</i>	



William W. Moore, Printer.

Here in poverty and comparative seclusion with much bodily suffering, he spent the greater portion of his remaining days. The benign influence of the balmy breezes and temperate climate of St. Andrews' Bay had such an effect upon his health, he thought for a while he was in a fair way of final recovery, but that shifting, smoothing disease, which kept him sitting upright for so many a lonely night, had been too long and deeply seated and his constitution too much shattered for such a hope to be realized: He ceased not to preach, however, and warn men in tears, on all and every proper occasion, and when opportunity offered he would travel out in the neighboring sparsely settled country to persuade men and women to be reconciled to God. On some of these occasions the scene was melting indeed, when all of the small congregation were weeping and crying for mercy as this man of God would reason in their astonished ears of righteousness, temperance and a judgment to come. Having found a friend while at St. Andrews in the Rev. and most excellent Major Coe, a retired minister in the Methodist connection, the wants of father Mercer, which otherwise would have been pinching in the extreme, were to a considerable extent supplied. That wealthy and benevolent gentleman committed trusts of profit to his hands by which he was able temporally to subsist, and invited him to the hospitality of his house and the bounty of his stores, whenever by enfeebling age and wasting disease, he should be no longer able to perform profitable services. In 1852 his son, George F. Mercer moved down to Florida, with whom the aged and feeble father lived from that date to his death.

After confinement to the house and great suffering for nearly a year, by a fall from a buggy, he gained strength to travel about a little, and in September, 1853, he assisted in a series of meetings with the Sardis Baptist Church, near Ochelise, Fla., with energy and great success, which resulted in the baptism of some thirty men and women. On the 18th of December following he was taken with a hard ague at the house of his son, with whom he was living, and from that time became perfectly helpless. His greatest suffering was an intense pain in his right thigh, which, descending, located in the foot. Lying in this situation nearly a month, under the care of devoted children and an attentive physician, mortification ensued, and on the 12th day of January, just upon the entrance of three score years and ten, he breathed his last, confidently, yet meekly resigning his soul into the hands of a faithful Creator. Besides other relatives and Christian friends, his venerable and beloved brother, Rev. Joshua Mercer, was with him at his death, all corroborating a remark by Major Coe in the closing services of his funeral, that he died as he had lived, a philanthropist, friend and Christian.

He served as Lieutenant and as Captain in the war of 1812 and for years at Crawfordville he held a seat on the bench of the Inferior Court.

The six children he raised (except a daughter who married into a Methodist family) all became Baptists in early life, thus demonstrating the power of parental influence.

His standard of piety was high, his sense of personal unworthiness exceeding deep, his desire to glorify God intense, his confidence in salvation by Christ strong and abiding. A great man in Israel has fallen. Gloriously he died, and his works do follow him.