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FLORIDA BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Cover: Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr. and his wife Margaret Cox Rennolds

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INTRODUCTION

Jerry M. Windsor

*Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Baptist Historical Society*

Welcome to the Eighth Issue of *The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage*

Our feature in this volume will be Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr.

Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr. (October 30, 1830-November 17, 1912) was a typical Florida Baptist preacher of his day.

He was from out of state. He was born in Virginia and raised in Tennessee. He was poorly educated and was highly intelligent. He had little training and could do almost anything. He received few invitations to preach and served widely. He was trusted by all and taken advantage of by many. He tried 20 different occupations and never found the work of his life until he was 72 years of age. He felt called to preach but had little confidence in his abilities. He was bivocational and always searched for a place for his family to worship and serve. He made very little money preaching and he and his family worked hard to feed the family and pay the bills. It was people like Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr. that have given us the spirit of hard work, organization, vibrancy and heritage that we now have in the Florida Baptist Convention.

Rennolds is representative. Not well known, highly committed, focused and Baptist to the core. He represents that flow of pioneer Baptists who came into the state for health, economic, vocational and family reasons. Following his post-civil war life he settled in Florida and never looked back. He led his family to worship in local churches where they lived and he started worship services in his home when no

church services were available. It was men and families like this that brought civilization to the Florida wilderness and gospel light to those who only knew darkness.

This information is based upon chapters 27-35 of the Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr. autobiography. It begins at the end of the Civil War (May 21, 1865) when he arrived back home in Paris, Tennessee and ends at his death in Jacksonville in 1912. The endnotes are based upon his autobiography and daily diary. The daily diaries are at the University of Florida Library and are on microfilm at the Florida Baptist Historical Society in Graceville. The decision was made early on to follow the typed manuscript of Cora Annie Markert. She was the oldest daughter of Rennolds and very interested in seeing his autobiography preserved. We did not correct the spelling or grammar in a desire to present the exact thrust of the manuscript.

Rennolds endured. He was faithful to the end. His light was not large but it was trustworthy and bright. May this slice of the Florida years (1882-1912) of a typical Florida bivocational preacher fill us with appreciation and humility because of those who have gone before us.

We have also in this issue a how-to guide for those who are in the process of writing their local church history. The Florida Baptist Historical Society is available to assist you in the worthy endeavor of recording, preserving, writing, interpreting, and publishing your local church history. Let us assist you where we can.

This journal could not have been compiled or published without the professional office assistance of Mrs. Jan Cunningham. She is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Florida Baptist Historical Society and her work and ministry is an example for us all.

Honoring those who honor Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Cunningham', written in a cursive style.



THE FLORIDA YEARS OF
EDWIN HANSFORD
RENNOLDS, SR.
(1882-1912)

Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr.

Introduction

I have long entertained the idea that I ought to write something of my life for the perusal of my posterity, and having today entered on my fifty-eighth year, I am impressed with the notion that it is time it was begun, as no one knoweth when his life here on earth will be closed.

I write this, not because I flatter myself that there is much in my life to be proud of, or worthy to be held up for the emulation of others, but because I feel that perhaps I may be justified in saying that “where little is given, little is required,” and because that any life faithfully written, affords examples of failures that may be beneficial in warning others of the pitfalls that beset us in this world, even though it may not contain noble deeds to stimulate others.

My life has in some respects been eventful, and may thus afford something to interest as well as instruct. No one could go through four years of war without having seen many things that would admit of reproduction with pen and ink. The latter half of the 19th century has certainly been productive of events, as stirring as any in the world’s history, excepting of course, the years that ushered in the Christian Era.

I desire also that my children should have something more than mere tradition to tell them of their ancestry. And it is my greatest regret that I cannot trace back farther into the past our lineage.

I commit my effort to those who read its pages, with the hope that it will be in some way or ways beneficial to those for whom it is written, or any others who may be tempted to read any or all of it, and I invoke the aid of Him whom “they labor in vain that build the house.”

E. H. Rennolds, Sr.
Orange Home, Florida

Beginning Real Life

Monday morning May 21st, 1865, I said to my father “I am ready to go to work at something, what would you advise me to do?”(1) “You can go to farming, that is the surest way. Here is plenty of land, if you will take charge of the farm, you can have all you can make above a support for the family.” Everything was paralyzed by the war, and there was no opening for any other business, just then. So I went to work that day. Before the year was out, I told my father that I preferred wages to the uncertainty of his proposal, and we settled at ten dollars per month, board and clothing, mostly for everyday wear, which my mother made me.

Thus, I entered into a farming life virtually under protest, and have kept at it most of my life under protest, and yet it is a pleasant life. Still I have often thought if I had gone West soon after the War and adopted surveying as a profession, where there was plenty to do, I might have done better financially.

Before leaving home for the war, I had on May 23rd, 1862, secured the consent of Miss Margaret C. Cox, second daughter of Elder Asa Cox(2), to become my wife, living three miles N. W. of Paris, Tenn. and on January 11, 1866, we married. Elder J. W. Bell, Baptist minister, who



Margaret Cox Rennolds

had been sent for failing to be heard from the ceremony was performed by Rev. J. W. Johnson a Methodist Minister residing nearby. The country not having recovered from the devastation of War, the marriage was a quiet one, only a few persons being present. Mr. T. G. Morris and Mr. W. D. Street acted as groomsmen, and Misses Annie E. Cox and Mary E. Alexander as bridesmaids. After a lunch we drove eight miles to my father's residence. While passing in sight of the steam mill of Mr. Geo. C. Street, (an Uncle of my Bride) who was always partial to both of us, he blew his steam whistle as long as one of the

vehicles was in view. At my father's a goodly company of young people had gathered and a merry time was had till a late hour.

My wife has proved a faithful companion, and help meet indeed, and has borne me seven children, Eugene Meshech, born April 2nd, 1867; Edwin Hansford Jr., born March 28th, 1869; John Taliaferro and Joseph Lee, (the latter dying at birth) born July 29th, 1870; Leon Asa, born July 28th, 1872; Cora Annie, born Sept. 17th, 1874; and Maggie Berah born Dec. 3rd, 1876.

During the year 1866, we lived with my father, and I superintended his farm. He furnished his younger sons, William and Thomas, and three negro men to perform the labor, and I receiving one tenth of the crop, and board of my wife and myself. The year was not a good one, and the newly freed slaves not profitable labor, and it was not remunerative to me.

In the fall of the year, my father told me that I could build on the East side of his farm near High Hill Church. I moved one of the negro cabins, and built some outhouses, and January 2, 1867 we set up housekeeping. Our parents giving us some furniture, the traditional bed, bedstead, and covering, and we bough ten dollars worth including

cooking vessels, paying my only five dollars cash, and going in debt for the other five.(3)

I succeeded only moderately well that year farming. Not having enough fresh land for a full tobacco crop, I secured the agency of the Collierville Nurseries, from my old teacher Mr. R. B. Keen. Did not succeed so well as I hoped, but secured enough trees to plant me an orchard.

In 1868 I hired a colored woman Caroline Break, and as she knew how to work in the field as well as in the house, she proved a valuable help, and I succeeded better than any year of my life in farming, selling 105 dollars worth of pork, and 130 of tobacco, and enough of oats, potatoes and etc. to make 300 dollars. I purchased me a set of surveying instruments, having always had a taste for surveying, and secured an appointment as Deputy County Surveyor from my old commander Lt. Col. Wm. C. Swor.(4)

It is well enough to mention here that on his death in the summer of 1869, I became a candidate for County Surveyor, the office being elective by the magistrates constituting the County Court. I was defeated by Dr. J. W. Lynch, who however said that the good race that I made demanded that he should appoint me a deputy, which he did. I was so much known as a surveyor under Col. Swor, but under Dr Lynch my acquaintance extended and my work increased, so that when Dr. L. declined re-election I was again a candidate, and was easily elected over my opponents, Capt. J. T. Postlewaite, a civil engineer, and Mr. Jas. Aycock. As I was a sober man and my competitors were not, the magistrates preferred me. After serving more than a year, the financial panic of 1873, had so much reduced the demand for surveying, and my attention being required at home, to overlook my boys, who were not yet enough to be trusted with managing the farm alone, I resigned and Rev. Johnson (J.W.) was elected). Seven years later, Mr. J. being supposed to be to sick too recover, I again became a candidate, but the magistrates thought it best to elect the man who was willing to accept it when it paid less, and Mr. J. defeated me and it was not in my heart to blame them.

My Father's Death And Results

In May 1871, my father died at the age of 65, thus depriving me of a wise counselor.(5) His disease was liver complaint, and he was sick about 10 days. I was appointed executor by his will, and while his affairs were honestly administered, my want of business tact and experience brought me into no little trouble. Our attorney, Hon. A. H. Stuart of Staunton, Va. failing to compel the Administrator of the Estate of my Uncle Dr. Taliaferro Rennolds, to pay over to me 700 dollars of the estate's assets due my father, compelled me to declare the estate insolvent, after most of the debts had been paid in full. This was very humiliating to me, but it could not be helped. At the earnest solicitations of the children of Mr. W. L. Crawford, and their relatives all of whom were my fast friends, I had consented to qualify as guardian for them, which through the malignity and etc. of their stepfather Mr. S. B. Hartsfield, and disagreement of attorneys, and incapacity of a drunken County Judge, Jno. W. Harris, I was given a great deal of trouble, but finally after several lawsuits and etc. won my case.

Having a desire to work land less hilly than that which my father gave me, I sold my land in January 1873, for \$1,900.00 and purchased land near my father-in-law, 3½ miles from Paris, Tenn., on the Iron Banks Road, buying it of Miss Maggie Alexander for \$2,000.00. It was more valuable than the land I sold, but had no dwelling on it. The summer of 1873 was a very dry one, and the crop a still shorter one.

I improved my place some by erecting a good house, but short crops, low prices and other misfortunes prevented me from being able to pay the last payment on my land, (some of the sale money of my other place having been used to build with, and to purchase stock, for hired hands to work) and borrowing money to pay it, was forced to mortgage my place, and finally had to give it up. In the meantime, my father-in-law gave my wife 80 acres of land on which we resided, there being a small three-room house on it.

My father-in-law having lost his two youngest daughters in the fall of 1874, we lived in the house with him, during the year 1875. His family consisted of himself, wife and youngest son, (Asa B.). I

continued to work my own land, and returned to it at the beginning of 1876. In 1882 my father-in-law having moved to Murray, Ky., where he was pastor, we again occupied his house, and cultivated part of his land, making the best crop I have ever made.

During those years my children attended school nearby, and part of the time Eugene and Edwin attended the Male academy at Paris, Tenn.

Not having sufficient land for my growing family and being unable to earn the money to buy more, I began to look around to see what else I could do, and hearing of the wonderful profits to be made by orange culture in Florida, and the demand for surveyors there, and the balminess of the climate there, I decided that it would be best for me to emigrate there.(6)

My father-in-law agreed to buy my land, and as soon as my corn was gathered and sold, I started the wagon, with two mules, driven by Mr. Henry Norton, and accompanied by Eugene and Edwin Jr. overland to that state. Then as soon as I could sell and deliver my tobacco, sell my goods and chattels, the others of us started by rail. Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Vinson, and our children, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Clore, and five children, Mr. Levi Jones and son Charlie, Mr. Luther Moore and Hamp Clark (colored) traveled on the same train with us. We left Paris, Tenn. on the morning of Nov. 17th, 1882, and after a very pleasant trip reached Wildwood on the 19th, spending the night there we took hacks next morning (Sunday) to Leesburg, and put up at the Milam House, our old neighbor Capt. J. B. Milam, proprietor.

Here we found so many old acquaintances who had proceeded us to the "Land of Flowers" that we felt very much at home. Next day we moved out to a house Capt. Milam had rented for us nearby in the country.

Coming as we did just as the oranges were ripe, and seeing the trees laden with them, and the wagons coming into town loaded with the golden fruit, and everybody seeming prosperous and happy we were delighted with the prospect.(7)

Life in Florida

While waiting for my team and wagon to arrive, I made short trips

into the surrounding country to familiarize myself with the new and strange conditions, and to hunt up a suitable place to buy and locate, and the boys and I secured some work packing oranges and etc. Mr. Norton and the boys, with the team and wagon arrived on Dec. 13th, all safe and sound.

On Dec. 19th, Mr. Norton and I started out to look at the country. Carried a Mr. Bradley of Woodville, Ohio to Tampa which we reached on the evening of the 21st. Spent the time till the 27th, looking at the country around Mango, Cork and Shiloh, and started back to Leesburg, reaching there on the morning of the 30th. After having seen parts of six counties, I decided to buy Mr. T. E. Hunter's 80 acres in sec. 11, T, 19 S. R. 23 E. about 8 miles North of West of Leesburg, and 4 miles S. E. of Wildwood for \$750.00 paying \$200.00 in money, \$200.00 in one mule and wagon, and notes for the other \$350; in six, twelve and eighteen months. And on January 5th and 6th, 1883 moved to it, camping in an old house a mile away till we could build.

My wife received appointment as teacher of the school (public) one mile north, and commenced teaching Jan. 22nd, John, Leon, Cora, and Maggie attending the school. Eugene working for Mr. W. D. Hunter at \$10.00 per month, and Ed helping me in the crop and working on the house. On Feb. 3rd we had one room ready to occupy and moved in.

Not knowing how to cultivate Florida soil, did not make much corn or cotton. Put out two acres or more of orange trees, by the side of two, which were three years old, (or had been set out that long) when I bought the place, also planted a nursery with both sweet and sour orange-seed, from which I not only enlarged my grove, but furnished trees for the boys to plant groves, and also many trees to sell.

Worked on the house of three rooms as time could be spared from the crop, and by latter part of March could use it all, and later built outhouses. The boys having slept in Tom Hunter's log homestead house till mine was finished, and again later on. I took contract to build house for Mr. Will Venable, living nearby, and worked on it with boy's help, in the summer.

In September Mrs. R. and I had attacks of fever, but not serious, and yet more serious than any sickness we had afterwards. Late in the

fall, (the Fla. Southern R. R. having been built) I secured the job of surveying the town of Lady Lake for Messrs. L. B. Lee and J. F. McLendon, 8 miles North of Leesburg.(8) This introduced me to the people of that vicinity and during the next two years I surveyed most of the land for four or five miles around that village. I usually had two or three of my sons to assist me, and soon had them so well trained that I could do much more work, than with raw hands. We received seven to eight dollars per day, and camping out in unoccupied homestead houses generally we did our own cooking. The weather usually being fine, with but little rain, and the land open pine woods interspersed with clear lakes we enjoyed the work very much.

Monday morning we would have a lot of bread cooked up, and putting our equipments and camping outfit in a one-horse wagon, we would hitch our one-eyed mule (Tobe) to it, and start out for the week. Usually not returning till Saturday night, and resting till Monday morning.

During the summer we would work up the grove and make a small crop on what land was cleared. In 1884-5 and 6 we raised and shipped vegetables, squashes, tomatoes, cucumbers, cantaloupes and melons. The grove was enlarged till had about eight acres, and the boys one or two each.

In winter 1883 and 4 Miss Lily Cloud taught the Lake Deaton School and boarded with us awhile. In winter of 1884 and 5, Mrs. R. taught again, and later Miss Tallullah Atkins taught several sessions. The school meanwhile being consolidated with the one at Orange Home Depot 1½ miles S.W. on F. C. and P. R. R. (now S. A. L. R. W.)

By 1886 the orange boom began to quiet down and the emigration very much decreased. Previous to this I did much surveying around Chetwynd, Bamboo, Whitney, Wildwood, Orange Home, Coleman and some at various other places. When the demand for surveying had been much reduced, it was necessary for the boys to seek other employment, and as they could not all be profitably employed at home, they secured jobs elsewhere, opening up land, planting and cultivating groves, budding nursery trees, cultivating vegetables, farming, and etc. which was the beginning of a separation which has resulted in scattering them very widely.

In October 1887, Hunter L. Wilson, my wife's nephew, came to Florida, and decided to engage in orange culture, and John sold him five acres of the land I had given him, and arranged for me to board Hunter and for Hunter's father, (Col. J. D. Wilson) to board John, at Winchester, Tenn. (his home) where John could attend the Normal School there, and he has ever since remained in Tenn. studying and teaching till his graduation, and teaching since his graduation and he is at this writing (August 1900) Principal of the Winchester Public School. In December 1898, he married Miss Leila Erwin of Winchester.

In the fall of 1885, I purchased an interest in a saw mill at Bamboo, with Messrs. Dan. Wilson, and Ben Wynns and sons as partners, and moved it to Dundee, 6 miles north of Leesburg on the Fla. Southern R. W. where we operated it for a year. My sister Jennie with her husband, W. S. Martin and children having come to Fla. in Oct. 1885, lived at Dundee. Eugene and Ed boarding with them, and they and Mr. Martin helping to operate the mill. They returned to Tenn. in the Spring of 1886. When I sold my interest in the mill perhaps in the fall of 1886, my sons returned home.

Freeze of 1894 And 5 And Results

On the nights of December 28th and 29th, 1894 a heavy freeze injured the orange trees. By Feb. 7th following the trees had put out a vigorous growth, and were full of sap, and on the nights of February 7th and 8th another severe freeze killed to the ground all the orange trees, except the extreme southern part of the State, and a few others here and there. These freezes were followed by others somewhat less severe a few years later, which pretty well exterminated all the trees north of Manatee, DeSoto and Lee Counties. This heavy loss caused an almost complete change in the economic conditions of a large part of the state, and a great many people deserted their dead groves, and sought other localities to secure the means of livelihood.(9)

In the spring of 1895, John and Leon made arrangements for their mother to visit her parents, John and others in Tenn. and about May 1st she left for that state remaining several weeks. A few days later the

State Board of Missions of the Florida Baptist Convention secured for me a pass over the F.C. and P. R. R. and Southern R. R. to Washington City to attend the Southern Baptist Convention and paid my fare thence to Philadelphia, New York City and Hamilton, New York to copy records from minutes of Florida Baptist associations held by American Baptist Historical Society and Samuel Colgate Historical Collections.(10)

Had congenial companions to Washington, where I stopped with my cousin's Maria, Belvedere and Virginia Hansford, who kept a boarding house at 241 N. Capitol St. only half a block from the Capitol grounds, enjoying my visit there. Enjoyed also the Convention as it was the only one I ever attended of the whole South. Also enjoyed seeing the sights of Washington, the most beautiful city in our country. I went on to Philadelphia, and copied the minutes there, visiting Independence Hall, and other interesting places, and then to New York, and up the Hudson Valley on the N.Y. Central and H. R. R. R. viewing the Palisades, Highlands, Catskill Mts., and Mohawk Valley to Hamilton N.Y.

Returning to New York City, I went to Orange N. J. to the home of Bro. Samuel Colgate, where I copied such minutes as we had no duplicates of and enjoying the hospitality, remaining two days(11). Then returning to the City spent a day and a half visiting Central Park, Brooklyn Bridge, Green Wood Cemetery and etc. Having Exchanged passes with Bro. L. D. Geiger. I took the Clyde Steamship, Iriquois and had a pleasant voyage to Jacksonville(12). Never having seen the ocean, It was a great treat, to spend two and half days upon it, especially as I had no sea sickness. My trip was robbed of much of its enjoyment by want of a congenial traveling companion, want of more means for expenses, and of more time, as I could not help thinking of my two daughters left at home, although I had left them in good hands, with Miss Sophia Sheppard to keep them company, and Bro. B. M. Bean and Mr. Sam Tyner to protect them at night.(13)

Till September 1898, I managed to make a living for my small family by farming, doing small jobs of surveying, looking after lands of non-residents and etc. My youngest son Leon Asa became of age July 29th, 1893, after which there was none to help me, and "every row was

mine”, as it was at first. Our eldest daughter, Cora A. married Mr. Fred C. Markert of Wildwood, June 21st, 1896 and two years later the youngest Maggie B. married Mr. Ruben D. Mathews, June 29th, 1898.

Thus there was no one to keep Mrs. R. company in my absence, except the two year old grand-daughter Ella Hansford, whose mother died when she was two weeks old, and who had been committed by her dying mother to her grandmother’s care with the approval of her father, our second son Edwin H. Jr.

When I bought the orange grove, I knew that half of it was on land belonging to the F. C. and P. R. R. Co. The extension of the grove had been mainly on this also, but when it came on the market, I purchased it for \$200, paying half cash and giving my note for the other half, which had been increased to \$175, which I was unable to pay without encumbering the place, and as it became necessary to pay I borrowed \$500.00 and mortgaged the place, being in need of funds to pay other debts, and properly fertilize the grove. Six months later the freeze ruined the grove, and destroyed the hope of being able to redeem the place, and thus leaving us homeless. I now began to look around for some other place to live and where I could have a better opportunity to provide the necessaries of life.

Removal To Jacksonville

When my second son Edwin H. Jr. learned that I was planning a move, he wrote me suggesting that I come to Jacksonville where he was employed at the bakery of Lorein Stein, so that he could have his little girl near him, and after visiting Jacksonville and looking over the surroundings, we rented a house on the S. E. Corner of Adams, No. 1202 East Adams and Van Buren Streets at \$10.00 per month, he agreeing to pay half the expenses, including rent, water, provision and etc.

I then closed out my business at “Myrtle Vale” (as we called the place), selling what we could and giving away what we could not sell, and on Sept. 1, 1898, moved to Jacksonville.(14)

After having lived nearly 59 years in the country it was not an easy

thing to adjust myself to the new conditions. The rush and hurry the want of quiet, unobserved surroundings, the unconcern of most of the people, whether you lived or died, whether you had the necessaries of life or starved, for want of them, the jealousy of those in business towards anyone entering the same kind of business, being strangers to our nearest neighbors, the proximity of a saloon, and all the evils that accompany it, and the seeming difference even in the religious life of the city from that of the country, these and many other things had to become familiarized, before one could feel at home.

But I finally became used to these things, and settled down to real life. But how to make a living, was the question of the hour. I tried collecting physicians bills for Doctors R.H. Dean, Miller and Cloud and others, but I soon found that those who were willing to pay, responded to notices sent through the mail, and those to whom a collector had to be sent, were either unable or unwilling to pay or both. So I quit that.

I tried patent medicines for the Economic Medicine Co. of Paris, Tenn. but found it slow business to introduce new medicines, where dozens of others had already occupied the field. So I had to abandon that.

The lot on which the house we rented stood, had about one fifth of an acre of land enclosed. This was rich river-bottom land, and after ditching and bedding it, I planted it in vegetables, principally for our own use, selling the surplus. By studying the soil, the demands of the market, and learning how to peddle them, in an ordinary market basket from house to house, I succeeded in finding a sale for all I could raise at a fair remuneration and thus kept the wolf from the door. I had never liked "peddling" and was unused and unqualified for it but "practice makes perfect" and offering only good vegetables I soon had no trouble in securing customers, and made many warm friends, who helped me to extend my trade. I sometimes acted as night-watchman at Bro. Loren Stein's Bakery, did odd jobs of carpentering, a little surveying, and thus pieced out my slender income.

In the Fall of 1899, having a pass over the lines of the F.C. and P. R. R. as Historical Secretary of Florida Baptist Convention, I visited several of the Associations, and small collections at these meetings

helped my exchequer some also. During summer and Fall of 1899 I preached once a month at Sanderson Fla. and a few dollars more was received.

As I walked the streets of Jacksonville, with a basket of vegetables on each arm, I often thought, "I am capable of doing better than this, when later I became Chaplain of the State Senate, and stood before that representative body, I felt I could say, "At last I have found something better."

Burning of Jacksonville

On May 3rd, 1901, I helped to clear away the dinner table, and went upstairs to take my usual siesta. About 1:30 P.M. my wife called to me, and said that a dense smoke was rising from the western part of the city, and that passers-by said that the whole of that part of the city was burning. A look out of the window convinced me that the fire was no small affair. I told my wife that I would go and see what the danger to us was. She asked me not to stay to long, as I promised I would not. Reaching the car line on Florida avenue, (a block away) I found the cars standing still, the current having failed from trouble with the machinery.

Not knowing now long the delay might last I decided to walk ahead, and took the shortest way along Adams St. The day was very warm for the season, and I soon realized that I must take it leisurely to keep from getting overheated, and I feared that I might need all my strength to save my household goods.

At Laura Street I turned North to the Park and diagonally N.W. through it. At the Hemming Monument I saw the first fire refugees, some ladies with a few things in their arms and their faces so warm that the blood seemed almost ready to gush out. At Hogan I turned West on Duval. At Julia the people were wetting the roofs and porches of their houses, on the south side of Duval, a little further on the firemen were fighting the fire on the north side, and as the wind blowing then from southwest I thought the fire would be kept north of Duval. I walked a block further to Cedar, and looking south I saw that a house on northwest corner of Cedar and Monroe was on fire. I went down there

and men were fighting the fire on north side of roof, with prospect of success, but I noticed that the south side of roof was on fire, and soon decided that it was beyond control; and that another swatch a block or more wide was doomed. I walked east on Monroe to Hogan and North on Hogan near the corner of the Park I saw Bro. G. E. Chase cross in



This burning house was one of hundreds that was lost that day.



One scene of that terrible day

front of me rolling a child's carriage, piled up with children's cloaks, gloves and etc., which I learned later contained Bro. Hobson's silverware. In front of the Baptist Church, I met Bro. D. T. Daughtry, and we discussed the chances of the churches escape, both thinking it safe. Bro. E. E. Cleveland was standing in his porch directing the removal of his furniture. At south east corner of Hogan and Ashley some men were bringing Bro. D. C. Andress' piano down the stairway. The Ebenezer M. E. C (Col) across Ashley St. was a mass of flames, and the wind now blowing fiercely tore the burning shingles off, and sent them flying through the air towards the east. I turned west on south side of Ashley and looked across Ashley to Dr. Williams house near the middle of the block, and in which Bro. W. A. Hobson our pastor lived. The rear of the building was in flames, some household goods were

piled on the sidewalk in front, and some persons standing about but no one I knew. (Bro Hobson and family had gone on an excursion up the St. John's River.)(15)

Seeing I could be of no use, the fire being very hot on south side of St. I turned back, and went down Church St. to Main, and down Main to Ed's Lunch room, which I found closed. I afterwards found out he was in cook-room packing things to move. I then turned up Adams for home. I noticed a building at corner of Church and Ocean on fire, and further on the roof of the Catholic Church was in flames at Church and Newnan, and I knew that everything to Hogan's Creek was doomed unless the wind should change. I stopped at Cora's, found Fred just come from the store and we talked over the situation. Then I went on home, and told Mrs. R. the prospect. Later resting awhile I walked down to Duval Street Viaduct. I saw Mrs. McClintock near St. Luke's Hospital and calling a passing hack, sent her to my house. On reaching the Viaduct, I found that the fire had spread and advanced, and the whole hillside on the west side of Hogan's Creek was one sheet of roaring, surging flames. But I was convinced that the lateness of the hour, the want of fuel to feed on, and the absence of anything loose about the Viaduct, would likely prevent further advance there. At Adams St. the shingle-mill had to be closely watched, and I helped others put out the fire when the bark etc. caught, and a bucket brigade kept a small house from catching and thus stopped its advance. At Bay St. the tin-roofed houses, the wide R.R. right of way, the work of the colored foremen, and the lulling of the wind, and change of direction stopped it there. I came home about sun down. Just as supper was over I heard a great roaring, saw showers of flying sparks and found on hurrying down Bay St., that it was the resin stored in the A.V. and W. warehouse on the River near Catherine St. which had caught fire. Though looking very dangerous only a few small places on roofs in East Jacksonville caught and these were easily extinguished, and so the fire ended.

Ed saved most of his stock and fixtures by moving them several times, on hand trucks, and finally putting them on a lighter, which the owner had towed over the River.

Next day, Saturday I went to see the ruins, and wrote cards to our relatives to assure them of our safety. Found that Gov. Jennings had ordered several companies of State Troops here, and put the city under "Martial Law".(16) A wise conclusion. Col. C.P. Lovell was put in command. He closed all the saloons, and had the city thoroughly patrolled.

On Sunday Ed secured a hack, and he, Mrs. McClintock, Mrs. R. Ella and I drove over to Riverside Park, where Bro. Hobson had through the daily papers invited the Baptists to meet. Finding the Campbellites had selected the same place we held a joint service.

Ed commenced on May 11th to reconstruct a Lunch Car for his business. Various hindrances prevented its completion for nearly a month. When finished, he put it on Laura St. near Bay, and did a pretty good business, till about Sept. 16th when a careless negro cook spilled gasoline on a hot stove and burned it so as to ruin it. I helped him and others to construct it.

He found employment at Sprill's cold-drink stand at Opera House and when the Sims building was ready for occupancy, secured store-room at 210 Main St. two doors from his old stand, fitted it up handsomely and on Feb. 1st, 1902 opened for business.

I find I have neglected to mention marriage of my sons;

Edwin H. Jr., Married Miss Ella Mobley of Adamsville, Fla. Feb. 21, '92 Eugene married Miss Ellen Cook of Centerhill, Fla., July 12, 1896. John T. married Miss Leila Erwin of Winchester, Tenn., December 30, 1898. Leon A. married Miss Ervina Johns of Starke, Fla. February 8, 1899.

My Religious Life

When a little over 4 years old I mischievously threw a peach stone at my mother's mirror, and when she came into the room, and saw what was done, I told her that my brother John (2½ years old) did it. The thought of this my first (and almost my only falsehood) produced conviction of sin; I was never able fully to shake it off. When 14 years old my conviction took strong hold of me at High Hill Church one mile

from my father's residence. It was the last night of a protracted meeting, and on going forward to be prayed for, I found myself sitting by the side of my brother John. The pastor Elder Issac C. Coker, mentioned that two sons of Brother Rennolds had come forward when "mourners were called", I made little progress heavenward, Satan usually snatching away the good seed sown in my heart. I entered the Army at 21½ unsaved. When a battle came on the fear of death produced fear of death, and I called on God for protection, but when the battle was over, the subject was dismissed. When the war was closed, and I saw its disastrous results, I began to consider how uncertain were all things earthly, and there came a longing for something sure and certain. A revival swept over the country, but it did not take deep enough hold on me.

God gave me a Christian wife, and though I was living what was recognized by others as a moral life, my wife's quiet, trustful----- devotion was a living rebuke to me, and the Spirit used it to bring pungent conviction of sin.

During the last week in September 1868, a Revival meeting was in progress at Bird's Creek Church (5 miles from my home). One morning during the meeting Bro. James H. Chiles Sr. came over to my house before breakfast, meeting me at the stable lot, he said to me after the usual salutations that a brother and sister of my wife' had been converted at the Birds Creek Meeting and would be baptized that day, and that himself and wife would come by for Mrs. R. if she wished to go. He then added "Ed it is time you were thinking of these things." The words went like an arrow to my heart, and were indeed, "seed sown in good ground".

Two weeks later a protracted meeting commenced at High Hill Church, less than half a mile from my home. I attended on Sunday, (October 13th) and again at night, my wife could not well go at night our first child (Eugene) being only a few months old. I went to work Monday morning, but attended church at night. While fixing my collar for me, my wife made some remark to me about my duty spiritually, and it was as a dagger to my already stricken heart. My father-in-law, Elder Asa Cox, pastor of the church was conducting the meeting, and during his prayer, preceding the sermon, I became deeply convicted of

sin, I determined that as soon as it was over I would go forward, and ask to be prayed for, without waiting for the sermon. But this determination quieted me somewhat, and I kept my seat till the invitation was extended after the sermon, when I promptly went forward with several others. Excitement very high at first but it quieted down soon. As was the custom in those days the pastor and others talked to me, but though I had repented I did not exercise faith.

I attended church Tuesday, and Tuesday night, and going to the “mourner’s bench” each time but making no progress seemingly towards saving faith.

On Wednesday morning as I sat at the breakfast table in the log cabin, used as a cook and dining-room in the backyard at home while I thought and talked to my wife about my condition I was enabled to lay hold of Christ by Faith, and my heart was filled with joy, and I exclaimed “this must be the Lord’s work.” Satan has been working with me for a long time, but he never made me feel this way.” From that hour to this I have never had a moment’s doubt of my regeneration. That day there was a baptizing near Bro. R.M. Jobe’s, which I attended, and on the way to the Church, as I looked over the old red hills, a landscape I had looked at a thousand times before, it seemed to be the most beautiful scene I had ever beheld.

After the sermon that day, I did not respond to the invitation to go forward and be prayed for, I felt to happy to need it. After dismissal Bro. James R. Chiles, Sr. came to me, and pointing to Bro. Joe Crawford who was standing nearby, said, “don’t you love Bro. Crawford and me better than you ever did” I replied, “I certainly do.” Then you are saved, he said, “for by this shall you know that you have passed from death unto life, if ye love the brethren.” My Aunt Sallie Rennolds, seeing me weeping and yet looking happy, came up and said, “Edwin, have you found the pearl of great price?” and I answered, “I hope so.”

On Saturday Night I with several others joined the church, my wife being one, and on Sunday morning I was baptized with others, by my father-in-law Elder Asa Cox, and today the view in memory is bright of that scene that lovely October (20th) day, with the quiet stream flowing

along, with its surface dotted with the yellow maple leaves, and on the bank, the little crowd standing, among them wife, father, mother, brothers, sisters, friends and neighbors.

That day a “young men’s prayer meeting” was organized, including about a dozen young men and boys, myself among the number. And the meeting closed. When we met the next Wednesday night, all looked from one to another and wished someone else would make a start. I had some experience in public debating and etc. and I took the Bible, read a chapter and tried to pray, several hymns were sung and interspersed with prayers by others. I had already commenced family worship, perhaps Monday night. The P.M. met regularly, sometimes in the winter when the weather was bad not more than six would be present. All grew in grace and after awhile the doors were opened to all who would come.

I became impressed with the thought that there was something for me to do in the Master’s Kingdom. Finally in February 1869 (I think) I told the church my feelings, and they decided to license me to preach and did so. I commenced my feeble efforts at the prayer meetings and gradually extended them to other churches, but it seemed to me to make little progress. I was sent to the association in 1868 as messenger and selected to assist in reading the church letters. At the Union meeting in 1869, I was elected Secretary, and at the Association in the Fall was elected Asst. Clerk. I continued to fill these positions for most of the time I remained in Tennessee.

In the summer of 1870, my cousin Richard B. Rennolds (who had been licensed after I was) and myself were called to ordination. On the 2nd Sunday in Sept. the presbytery met at High Hill Church and ordained us. My father and father-in-law and Bro. J. W. Bell, and one or two more constituted it. Bro. Bell preached the sermon. I continued to preach as opportunity offered, but with some misgivings as to whether I had not missed my calling. While I had faith in God’s accomplishing his plan of evangelizing the world I did not have a clear view of the part I was to perform. I received no call as pastor, though there were pastor less churches. I could see no visible results of my efforts. So after about 6 years I told the Church how I felt about it and asked them to release me from the obligation to preach, which they reluctantly did.(17)

I served as clerk of the Association (western District) in 1874. Having moved 8 miles away from the church in 1875, I found it too inconvenient so I removed my membership to Parish Church, where I was elected clerk and deacon. But as I preferred a country church, I changed my membership to Birds Creek. While my wife and I were members at Paris, our oldest son Eugene M. was converted at a revival held by the pastor Bro. W. C. Grace, and assisted by Dr. W. A. Nelson and he was baptized by Bro. Grace.

When I removed to Sumter Co. Florida in November, 1882, and settled 1½ miles N.E. of Orange Home, I found myself six miles from the nearest Baptist Church. Some of the neighbors, in the spring of 1883 asked me to superintend a union Sunday School, at Lake Deaton School House, one mile north of my residence. This I did for a few weeks, but the interest soon slackened till but few besides my own family attended, when I decided that it would be best to have Bible study in my own family on Sunday morning, which I did, till an opportunity opened to attend a Baptist S.S.

In November 1893, Mrs. R, Eugene and myself united with Equity (now Lady Lake) Church.(18) In December 1883, a Church was organized at what is now Whitney Station on the S. A. L. R. R. and in July 1884 we moved our membership there. I was at once recognized as Deacon, elected Clerk, and also Superintendent of the S. S. and teacher of the Bible Class, serving also as Trustee, and Treasurer.

Here I seemed to have found the work intended for me to do, and my efforts seemed to be highly appreciated by the church and its pastors, W. J. Hughes, A. E. Cloud, L. D. Geiger, B. M. Bean, T. W. Spicer, and R. Lovell.(19)

In October 1884, I was elected Clerk of the Alachua Assoc. and re-elected annually till 1898, when I removed from its bounds.

I became interested in the history of the Association and at the request of several brethren, I began the collection of materials to write it up. I found that as the Association originally occupied all the territory East of the Suwannee River, now covered by fifteen other Associations, that its history would involve a record of much of their past, and that it would be better that a history of all the Associations in the State be

written in one volume. I suggested it to the Associations that the matter be laid before the State Convention, which was done. The convention agreed to take up the work, and I was elected historical Secretary, with instructions to report to the State Board of Missions. Since then I have given much time to the work as I could, and have received some Compensation. I have found it a labor of love. I have visited nearly all the Associations in the State, some of them several times, and have collected much material, and my labors have been warmly commended by many of the brethren and sisters. In the years 1898 and 1899, passes were given me and I visited Union Meetings and Associations without cost.(20)

At the session of the Convention held in Lake City, in January 1893, I was elected Asst. Rec. Sec. which position I have held till the present date, 1902.

In while Bro. Bean, my pastor was preaching from the word “Mary” John 20th Chapter and 16th verse, and dwelling on the idea that whoever has a message ought to be faithful to deliver it, I became impressed with the thought that I was not delivering my message, and at the next meeting a month later, I told the church of my feelings and they secured a record of my ordination, from High Hill Church Tenn. and restored to me authority to preach. I at once commenced preaching once a month at Whitney, continuing to act as superintendent and preached at such places as I could reach. Since my removal to Jacksonville, I have preached at Union Meetings and Associations and occasionally at other places, and have supplied in Jacksonville for Bros. Parsons and Hobson when they were absent.

In December 1901, I was elected Pastor at Bethany, Nassau Co., and have preached for them till this date, Sept. 1902.(21)

My preaching is so different from the kind which they have been accustomed to hearing, that I felt that I was not reaching them, and as I was unused to regular preaching that it was a great task for awhile but gradually I was enabled to secure self-confidence, and so enjoy the work. At the September meeting, Bro. D. Sikes came and preached till Thursday, and much interest was aroused. Three young men, Hilliard Jones, Wade and David Sauls, and four young ladies, Mabel, Myrtle and

Minnie Sauls were baptized.

Renewal of Autobiography April 18th 1911

After a long interval of rest I, today, take up the thread of my life to bring it up to date.

At the close of the protracted meeting, mentioned above, I was notified that Bro. Sikes had been called as pastor and thus ended my first attempt at a pastorate. It was a great shock to me, but I accepted it as the Lord's doing.

In October 1903, I was elected Pastor at Macedonia (now Dinsmore). My experience here was about the same as at Bethany and a year later, the church called another pastor and so for only two years of my ministerial life, have I been pastor. Since that time I have only preached as occasion offered.

Though I do not doubt my call to preach, I at the same time think it was not intended that I should be engaged in regular pastoral work.

Chaplain of the Florida Senate

I have always preferred praying to preaching. I had rather talk to God than to people. So at the Assembling of the Florida Legislature in April 1903, I sought the position of Chaplain of the Florida Senate.(22)

I had two opponents, but was elected on the first ballot, receiving, 18 votes out of 31, my gray hairs and my "Confederate Cross of Honor," no doubt helped much in securing this honor.(23) The new wings of the Capitol addition, had just been completed and so I had the honor of offering the first prayer in the new Senate Chamber, in the South wing of the state house.

The remembrance of the service of my maternal grandfather, (Theodosious Hansford) as clerk of the Senate of Virginia, 1800 to 1825 and of my uncle, (Addison Hansford;) 1825 to 1850 and of the desire of my mother that I, her first born and best loved child, should at some time be honored by serving in prominent public station, has added zest to the pleasure it has afforded me to represent my Master, before the

people's representatives. And it has given me more joy to be a "Ambassador of Christ," than a representative of the people.

My salary was only \$100.00 but I managed to save about \$40.00 of it and decided to visit my old home in Tenn. and secure more data for a history of Henry County's soldiery in the Civil War.(24)

So I left home in June and returned home _____ I enjoyed the trip very much.

Sept. 1st, 1902 we rented and moved to No. 44 E. 5th St. where we lived till March 1904, when we rented and moved to 101 E. 7th St. In May 1908, Ed bought a half interest in the house at 2219 Hubbard St. and in March 1920 he sold it and bought a house at 515 E. 5th St. where we now reside.

During my stay in Tallahassee I had drafted a rough outline of my History and on returning from Tennessee In 1903, I had worked assiduously at revising and rewriting it. To get the rolls of the various companies, even approximately correct, entailed much labor and more thought.

At the session of the State Baptist Convention at Lake City in January 1903, I was elected secretary, which place I have since filled by continuous re-election. I have felt fitted especially for this position and have done some of the hardest work of my life to fill it satisfactorily.(25)

Preparation, Publication and Sale of My History of Henry County Commands in the Confederate States Army

I had from the close of the Civil War, desired to see a History of Henry County's gallant soldiery written. When it became evident that if it was written, I must do it, I applied myself to the task. In many respects I was prepared for it. By nature I was given a fine memory. I enlisted early and saw (with small exceptions) all the service in which my command participated. I had training for collecting and arranging data. And I knew where to hunt for material to fill the gaps in my own knowledge. Then my heart was in it. As Secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention I was enabled to get R. R. tickets for adds in the minutes

and this enabled me to visit Tenn. in 1904-5 and 6.

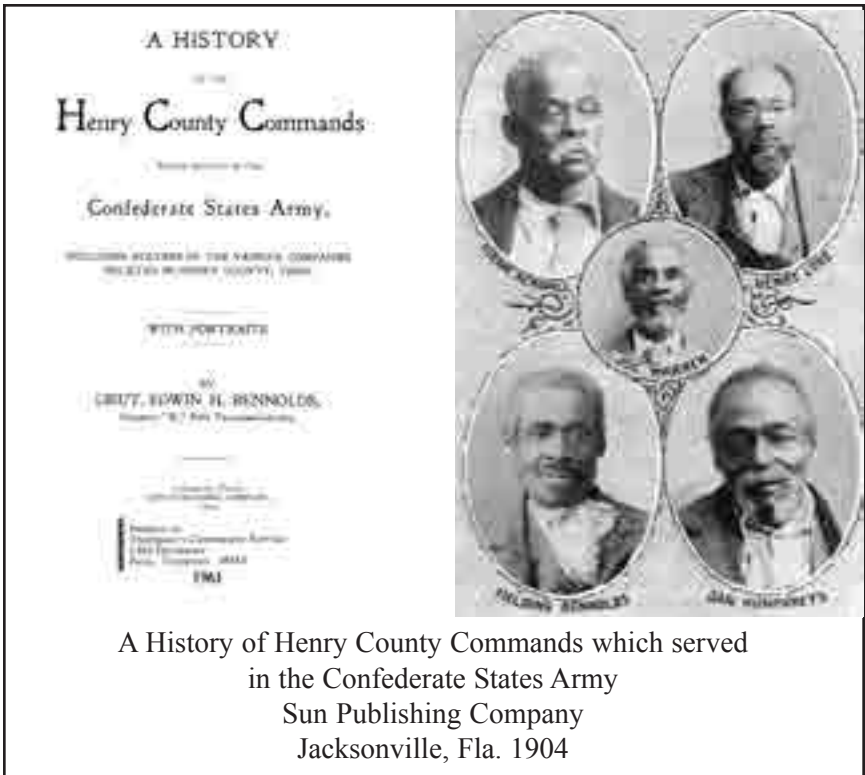
So I attended the Southern Baptist Convention at Nashville, Tenn.



LIEUT. EDWIN H. RENNOLDS.

in May 1904 and spent a month in West Tenn. gathering the final material for my book. About the middle of June I returned to Nashville and attended the Southern Baptist Convention and then home. I at once made arrangements with the Sun Publishing Company to print my book and with the H. and W. B. Drew to bind it. Prepared the M. S. and watched its printing, reading every page of the proof and in August had the pleasure of seeing it come from the bindery. My wife in the meantime had gone on a visit to our relatives in Tenn. and wrote me not to wait for her return.

Upon which I started out to sell the book, going via Chattanooga, Memphis, Union City, Hickman, and Fulton, Ky. and Martin, Tenn. to Paris, Tenn. My schoolmate, Pleas. J. Diggs, loaned me a horse for a week and I canvassed the N. W. part of the county and then along the R. R. walking from Springville to the Methodist Camp-Meeting at Manly's Chapel, remaining from Saturday to Monday, then continuing my walk to Mr. McCullough's and spent the night, was taken with a chill during the night, so slight as not to recognize it. Next morning felt too weak to go to Mansfield. so turned my steps towards my father- in-laws, about six miles, towards Paris, riding a little in a buggy. The second night I had a chill, which was unmistakable. I had suffered from an attack of indigestion, a year before (Oct. 1903) but this second attack of indigestion, was much more severe than the first and for the first two days the result was in doubt.



A History of Henry County Commands which served
in the Confederate States Army
Sun Publishing Company
Jacksonville, Fla. 1904

An old friend Dr. I. A. McSwain was called in and his skill had much to do with my recovery. The nausea was so great that I dared not turn over, or move much to brush pestilent flies away. The second day, all unexpectedly, my eldest daughter, Cora stepped into the door with her baby, (my first namesake) in her arms and presently her husband and two older children. They were on their way back to Florida from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I felt then that I was sure of the careful nursing, I so much needed and which my aged father-in-law and his wife could not give. I suffered much in body and much in mind.

The publication of my book seemed in response to the leading of Providence. Five friends, (A.B. White, Dr. S. H. Caldwell, A. A. Miller, Dr. J.T. Irion, P. J. Diggs, R. P. Diggs, Maj. S. C. Cooper, Jno. T. Upchurch, and C. W. Kennerly) had endorsed my note in bank for

\$600.00 to enable me to publish it. I felt like I could not die content and leave them to pay a debt of that amount. So I besought God to spare me till I had sold enough to pay cost of publication and he mercifully answered my plea for restoration to health.(26)

When I had convalesced sufficiently to stand the trip home, I accompanied my children to Florida.

The balmy climate of Florida and God's mercy, enabled me to regain strength and when spring, or early summer returned, I went back to Tenn. going by way of Louisville, Ky. where I attended the U.C.V. Reunion coming back as far as Chattanooga, going thence to West Point, Tenn., via Tusculumbia, Ala. where I visited my eldest sister (Jennie) missing the marriage of her youngest daughter, caused by a delayed train.

I stopped in Memphis, Union City, Hickman (Ky.) Martin, Fulton, (Ky.) Dresden, and McKenzie to Paris. At the invitation of Comrade J. W. Howard, there, I made his home my stopping place and was kindly treated by his sons and daughters and self.

I had the free use of my father-in-law's horse and buggy, Comrade S. A. Miller's horse and Mr. Joe Howard's buggy, at different times and rode or drove rather over the country, selling my book. I also went by rail to Murray, Paducah, and Mayfield, Ky. At the latter place I visited my sister Alice and my wife's brother M. M. Cox.

My book sold pretty readily at \$2.00 in 1903, but I found on returning in 1904, that many had borrowed it and its sale was so slow that I reduced the price to \$1.00.

The malarial season returning in the fall I was again attacked with a chill and fearing to risk the malaria, and cool weather being due I decided it was best to come home.

During the winter and early spring, I built up my health and early in May 1906, I returned to Tenn. I stopped to view the battlefields at Lovejoy and Jonesboro and Kennesaw Mt. Though I had no one to help me enjoy it, still it was a melancholy pleasure to visit again the stirring scenes of the Civil War or the places that recalled them to mind. I stopped in Chattanooga during the session of the Southern Baptist Convention and then continued my trip to Paris, making my

headquarters at Comrade J. W. Howard's, but also visiting my father-in-law, four miles S. E.

Dr. S. H. Caldwell kindly loaned me a mare and buggy and I rode over not only Henry county, but also parts of Benton, Henderson, Carroll, Gibson, Weakley and Obion in Tenn. and Calloway, Graves and others in Ky. I had to hunt relatives or near relatives, where people had moved or passed away and this was a tiresome and tedious business and sometimes very discouraging. But there was compensation in the fact that I met many old friends, some of whom I had not seen since my boyhood.

Early in Sept. I found I had sold nearly all the books I had bound and I called together the endorsers of my note. Mr. A. B. White and Comrades S. H. Caldwell, S. A. Miller and R. P. Diggs responded and messages were sent by comrades, S. C. Cooper and I. T. Irion. I told them that before any more money could be gotten out of the book, more would have to be put into it, by having more of them bound and asked if I should use some I had in the bank for that purpose. They asked how much of the note was unpaid, and when I told them \$93.00, they said that each would pay his prorated part \$9.30 each, and that they expected to have more than that to pay. I thanked them heartily and felt that I was the happiest man in Paris.(27)

I soon wound up my business and returned home, bidding adieu to old friends and scenes of my boyhood and early manhood, perhaps never to see them again.

I stopped at Winchester to see my son John and family and also my brother-in-law, Col. J. D. Wilson and family, and at the battlefield of Rosaca.

Since returning home in the fall of 1906, I have done but little in the way of earning a living. While residing at 2219 Hubbard Street I had a large garden and made something at raising vegetables, but not near so much as in East Jacksonville.

In February, March and April 1904 I had been Office Editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, then published in Jacksonville. W. A. Hobson and W. L. C. Mahon Editors. I resigned when I started to Tenn. When the paper was again moved to Jacksonville in March 1909, I helped

Bro. C. M. Brittain in the Witness Office, and for a month was acting Editor. I enjoyed it immensely, especially editing the Notes and Comments department for which I have both taste and talent. The pay however was only nominal and as the confinement indoors was not good for my health I resigned.(28)

I was re-elected Chaplain of the State Senate in 1905 and 7. My friends among the held over senators in the Legislature of 1909 allotted the Chaplaincy to Senator H. H. Buckman of Duval. But he was an anti prohibitionist and did not want me, and selected an Episcopalian of Tallahassee.(29) It was very trying, especially when I knew I would receive the vote of two thirds of the Senators had it come to a vote. My friends were indignant as those among the holdovers had given him the selection because I was a candidate and one of his constituents. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed" and so when I learned that Bro. D. H. Sloan, Senator from Polk County, had been allotted the right to name the Chaplain, I went to work. At the request of Leon I let him make the overtures and the friendship of Bro. Sloan and the volunteered intercession of Senator Hudson secured my selection and so I am here again in Tallahassee, and am enjoying the chance to work thus in the Master's Vineyard. To Him be all the praise. I am glad also that I have the opportunity to earn something to secure the necessaries of life. My pension of \$120.00 a year, my salary as Chaplain, probably \$200.00 for two years being all I have to depend on.

September 20th, 1912

After the Legislature adjourned June 2nd 1911, I spent the summer mainly at home, reading, making scrapbooks and etc. Surveying boundaries of Callahan in July was rather too much for me. Did two or three other small jobs. Had an attack of cholera morbus. August 5th Mrs. R. spent a few days visiting Maggie and family, and Ella some at Plant City with relatives, and I was much alone, Ed being away some as detective. Had an attack of bowel trouble September 5th. This with previous cholera morbus left me in a bad shape and so September 24th went to Hampton Springs for two weeks, paying \$10.00 per week board.

This helped to start me on the upgrade, and I continued to improve.

January 15th, 1912 I went to Lady Lake to visit Maggie and family till the 22nd and then to Ocala to the State Baptist Convention. Was re-elected Secretary and got through my duties very well.(30)

As the Confederate Reunion met at Macon, Ga. nearer to me than ever before, I decided to go to it, leaving home May 6th. The crowds were so great and I so nervous that I had to keep pretty quiet. However



THE MARKERTS

Irene, Edwin, Maude, Cora and Fred

enjoyed some anyway. On the 10th I had my ticket extended and went to Tenn. Visiting Sister Alice and daughter Ethel, at Chattanooga, then son John and family at Fayetteville, Tenn. Then Bro. Tom and wife and son Hansford and family at Summertown, Sister Jennie and her daughter Nellie and family at Iron City. and meeting her son Winfield on the train, stopped a day or so with Sister Alice at Chattanooga and reached home June 4th having enjoyed the trip very much.

The summer was very warm, but in some respects enjoyable, especially the almost entire absence of flies and mosquitoes, which

seems wonderful. It is likely, mainly the result of the efficient work of the City or County Board of Health.

September 3rd, Ella went to Lady Lake to visit Maggie and family. I was taken that day with bilious fever, lasting only parts of two days. But it was followed by inflammation of the bronchial tubes. This Dr. Dean says is an accompaniment of the cases in the city and which is epidemic here. By the second day Mrs. R. was attacked and was barely able to prepare light food for both of us and for several days it was a struggle with both of us to keep going. Some of the neighbors helped and when it became known to the church members, they began to call and send in food. The attacks lasted about two weeks. Ella had her attack (though of shorter duration) before she left home -----

The following was added by Mrs. Cora Annie Markert, oldest daughter of E. H. Rennolds.

Here our Father laid down his pen, never to take it up again. "What I have written I have written." To quote his own words from the Introduction:

"No one knoweth when his life on this earth will be closed."

On Sunday morning-November 17th, 1912 his ended. As the first hymns of the morning worship were being sung at the Main Street Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida, word was brought that Brother Rennolds had just died. As the announcement of the sad news was made to the assembled congregation, it was evident how much he was loved and esteemed by those in whose fellowship he had lived. Grief at his departure will be felt all over the state for he was intimately known from one end of Florida to the other. It could have been said of him that he was a man "in whom there was no guile: a simple, sincere soul: a gentle, lovable spirit; meek, but firm and unswerving in principle."

Interpretive Notes

(1) Edwin Hansford Rennolds, Sr. (1839-1912) was 24 years of age when he made this request. He was single, educated for his day, spiritually lost, Civil War hardened and ready to get on with his life. Rennolds not only wrote his autobiography, he also kept a diary. The Florida Baptist Historical Society has the diary of Rennolds from 1877-1912 on microfilm. The daily diary entries were usually 60 words or less. He stated his manual labor for the day, (“I cut up wood.”) referred to any spiritual endeavor (“I walked to prayer meeting.”), and nearly always commented on the weather (cool again at night). (Wednesday, January 3, 1900 diary entry.)

(2) Elder Asa Cox was pastor of High Hill Church near Paris, Tennessee, when Rennolds made his profession of faith in October 1868 in a revival meeting. James H. Chiles, Sr., and Margaret C. Cox had witnessed to Rennolds prior to his personal conversion. (*Autobio.*, pp. 54-55.) Cox went to Murray, Kentucky as pastor in about 1882. (*Autobio.*, p. 48.)

(3) The post Civil War era was a cashless society. Farmers lived on the “furnishing” plan where all their needs were “furnished” at planting time and then the debt was repaid at harvest time. Rennolds and his family suffered severely for lack of income. He probably never earned over \$220 a year in his whole life. (*Autobio.*, p. 47.)

(4) Rennolds wisely used all of his Civil War contacts. He fought in the 5th Tennessee Infantry, Company “K” and afterwards “D”. On April 24, 1865 when the Tennessee 5th surrendered there were only 30 men left out of the 1,300 who served in its rank and file. Rennolds reached the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in the war. Rennolds and his brother John served together during the war. Fielding Rennolds, a family slave served beside them as their personal cook. (*Autobio.*, pp. 11-14.) Fielding proved to be cook, medic, friend, nurse and confidant. In April 1862 John contracted typhoid fever. This was during the battle of Shiloh and John had continuously drunk out of contaminated water sources out of feverish thirst. Edwin and Fielding did all they could to save John but he died on April 17, 1862 and was buried at Corinth, Mississippi. On April 27, 1862 the father and cousin of the Rennolds boys went to check on them. Fielding was sick and “wanted to go home.” Edwin agreed for Fielding to go back home with his father and cousin. (*Autobio.*, p 14.)

(5) Rennolds seemed to have a wonderful relationship with both of his parents. He said his father had “A clear head, and fine judgment. He was very

conscientious, and charitable, never turning the needy away empty.” His father died May 20, 1871. (*Autobio.*, p. 3.) His father was Robert Rennolds (1805-1871) an ordained Baptist preacher and he served as moderator of the Western District Baptist Association in Kentucky from 1862 to 1864. (*Autobio.*, p. 3.) His mother was Jane Hansford (1810-1881) and he said, “She was very low in stature, round and plump, when young with black hair, and hazel eyes”. (*Autobio.*, p. 5.)

(6) This was no simple decision. According to Microsoft data it is 765 miles from Paris, Tennessee to Leesburg, Florida. Rennolds and his family had 17 other people traveling with them. They traveled by train November 17-19, 1882, and Henry Norton, Eugene and Edwin, Jr made the trip to Florida by wagon. They arrived on December 13, 1882, “all safe and sound”. (*Autobio.*, p. 48.)

(7) Rennolds and his family saw citrus as the answer to their financial needs. The population of Florida in 1880 was 269,493. Tampa had less than 1,000 residents. Land was selling for less than \$10 an acre. Citrus was a prosperous business but the 1894-1895 freezes ended all of that. Land became generally unclaimed and inexpensive. In 1881 Hamilton Disston, The Philadelphia saw industrialist, bought four million acres in Central Florida for 25 cents an acre. In 1893 when Henry Flagler built his railroad down the Florida east coast he secured a charter that gave him 8,000 acres of land for every mile of railroad he built south of Daytona.

(8) The town Lady Lake according to Rennolds was eight miles north of Leesburg. (*Autobio.*, p. 49.) The railroad came through the area in 1884. The authorities wanted to name this town in Lake County “Cooper” but the locals won out with the more picturesque name of “Lady Lake.” Leesburg was established in 1853 and named after Calvin and Evander Lee.

(9) There is no way we can over estimate the tragedy of the 1894-1895 citrus freeze. People actually walked away from their land. They could not even pay the taxes on the land. Rennolds and family could have hardly come to Florida at a worse time. Record low temperatures in 1886 caused major crop damage. The freeze of February 1895 caused an estimated one hundred million dollars in damages. In 1887 yellow fever hit Key West, Manatee, and Tampa. In 1888 it hit Jacksonville and there were 4,656 cases with 427 deaths. In January 1899 it snowed in Florida and nearly two inches fell in Jacksonville.

(10) The Southern Baptist Convention met in Washington, D.C. in 1895 and in 1920.

(11) Rennolds spent two days with Samuel Colgate in Orange, New Jersey.

Samuel Colgate (1822-1897) was the son of William Colgate (1783-1857) founder of the Colgate Palmolive Peet Soap Company. Both men were philanthropists, and dedicated to Baptist causes. Samuel Colgate gave over 250,000 Baptist items to Colgate University in 1892. I looked through the Colgate correspondence at the American Baptist Historical Society location in Rochester, New York, but found no letters to or from Rennolds.

(12)The steamship trip from New York City to Jacksonville took about three days. (*Autobio.*, p. 50.) The Clyde Steamship Line had ten ships and all were named after Indian tribes. The Iroquois was put into service in 1888.

(13)Bro. B. M. Bean is a name well known to Florida Baptists. (*Autobio.*, p. 51). B. M. Bean (1846-1911) was the first superintendent of the Florida Baptist Orphanage (1903-1911).

(14)Jacksonville was already a thriving city when Rennolds and his family moved there on September 1, 1898. (*Autobio.*, p. 51.)

(15)William Andrew Hobson (1862-1960) was pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville (1900-1923). The fire of May 3, 1901 lasted only eight hours but it burned 466 acres, destroyed 2,368 buildings and left 10,000 people homeless. Seven lives were lost in the fire and at least three of them were by suicide. Rennolds in his May 3, 1901, diary entry gave the same general facts as in his autobiography. He closed his diary writing for the day by writing, "It has been a terrible day. Clear and warm."

(16)Governor William Sherman Jennings (1863-1920) (*Autobio.*, p. 53.) was the youngest governor elected in the State of Florida at age 37. Governor Jennings was a member at First Baptist Church Brooksville and when he became Governor of Florida he became a member of First Baptist Church Tallahassee.

(17)Rennolds was always a man of strong ethical commitment. His willingness to disavow his preaching ministry was a sincere decision on his part to do what was right for him and the church. (*Autobio.*, p. 56.)

(18)The Lady Lake Church was first known as Equity Baptist Church. (*Autobio.*, p. 56.)

(19)Rennolds was in good company. W. J. Hughes (1849-1900) was well educated and served as pastor of most of the churches of Sumter County. A. E. Cloud (1828-1890) was educated at Mercer and served as pastor at Jonesboro, Georgia, for 30 years. He came to Florida in 1881 due to "lung" trouble and later served as pastor at Leesburg and Lady Lake. L. D. Geiger served as the state convention director from 1898-1901.

(20)There is some question about the "much material" that was collected

(*Autobio.*, p. 57.) The Baptist College of Florida has some associational minutes that came from the Stetson Collection when much Florida Baptist material was moved to Graceville. Some of the minutes actually have Rennolds name on them. However few “complete” sets of minutes are available.

(21) Rennolds preached in a number of churches and as pastor of two. (*Autobio.*, p. 57.) He said that he went as pastor of Bethany in Nassau County, Florida, in December 1901. This was for a short duration. In the *1901 St John's River Baptist Association Minutes*, Charles Conway is listed as pastor of Bethany In October 1901 (p. 19). M. L. Dyess is listed as pastor of Bethany in the October 1902 (p. 19) minutes. There is no Bethany Church listed in Nassau County in the 2005 *Florida Baptist Annual*. Rennolds was also chosen to serve as pastor of Macedonia (later Dinsmore) in October 1903. This too was a very brief tenure.

The pastorate was a “shock” to Rennolds. He did not foresee the beauty contest mentality of the annual call. After a total of two years in the pastorate of two churches Rennolds switched to supply preaching, and concluded the pastorate was not for him.

(22) Chaplain of the Florida Senate was the work in which Rennolds found his niche. (*Autobio.*, p. 57.)

(23) The “Confederate Cross of Honor” was recognized by all Confederate Veterans as a mark of distinction. (*Autobio.*, p. 58). This important medal has been passed down and the Edward Markham family in Chattanooga shared with me that this medal is still in the family. On October 13, 1862 an act of the Confederate Congress stated that a medal would be given to CSA veterans. However due to war time shortages the medals were not produced.

Mrs. Alexander S. (Mary Ann Lamar Cobb) Erwin of Athens, Georgia, conceived the idea of the United Daughters of the Confederacy bestowing the “Southern Cross of Honor” medal to all Confederate veterans. This concept was adopted by the national UDC in November 1899.

Mrs. S. E. Gabbett of Atlanta designed the medal and the first presentation was made to Confederate Veterans on Confederate Memorial Day, April 26, 1900, and has since been known as the “Southern Cross of Honor.” The last United Confederate Veterans meeting was in 1952 with five veterans surviving at the time.

Rennolds clearly referred to his award as the “Confederate Cross of Honor.” The technical name for the medal he wore would be “The Southern Cross of the Legion of Honor.”

(24) This book is of unique significance. (*Autobio.*, p. 58.) Civil War

history has always fascinated me. This book gives one of the best personal straight forward accounts of fear, boredom, disappointment, and deprivation you can find from the period. The local history and research is outstanding. A *History of Henry County Command* can be purchased on ebay for \$349.99.

(25)Note the Florida Baptist Convention met in the month of January in 1903. (*Autobio.*, p. 58.)

(26)Five friends are mentioned and nine friends are listed. (*Autobio.*, p. 59.)

(27)Actually the book was reprinted in 1961.

(28)The *Florida Baptist Witness* went through numerous changes in this time. (*Autobio.*, p. 60.)

(29)The Chaplaincy of the Florida Senate was important to Rennolds. (*Autobio.*, p. 60.)

(30)The Florida Baptist Convention met in Ocala in 1912. (*Autobio.*, p. 61.)

THE FUTURE OF YOUR LOCAL CHURCH HISTORY



Jerry M. Windsor

*Secretary-Treasurer
Florida Baptist Historical Society*

What church do you think of when someone speaks of your local Baptist church? It may be your home church or it may be the local Baptist church where you are a member. Whatever church you think of you are then usually showered with good mental images of fellowship, worship services, special events, revivals, Vacation Bible School, baptisms and other important days in the life of the church.

Before you know it someone points out to you that this is the life of the church. The day-to-day operations and ministries constitute the history of a local Southern Baptist church. Documented decisions, random picture taking, clerk minutes, Sunday School reports, and financial statements blend with stewardship, mission involvement and deacon ministry to comprise the care values and history of a local church.

The first five years of most Baptist churches are so full of survival and growth techniques that few realize that history is being made whether it is being recorded or not. It usually is about ten years into the life of the church before someone begins to see the need of a systematic way to maintain proper church records for later verification and celebration. When someone determines that historical records need to be kept in a formalized way there are at least 12 steps you can take to see that the best approaches are taken to recall, record, store, and even publish the history of your local Baptist church.

Step one-A Personal Commitment

It is not unusual to have one person in the church who is particularly interested in the background, history and work of the local church. They love the church and are faithful to Christ and His Kingdom. They feel a special connection to the past of the church due to personal or family involvement. Maybe they have already informally collected pictures, news articles and special event brochures as it relates to the ministry of the church. They have shown a willingness and a giftedness for collecting, sharing and communicating the life of the church. That person needs to be acknowledged and viewed as a chief resource person for researching, writing, and presenting your church history to the congregation and the community. When someone hurts to see the church history properly presented that person should be marked for service. They need to be personally committed to Jesus Christ, a faithful member of the church and free to give the time and effort essential for this task.

Step two-Church Decision

A pastor or church member may discern giftedness on the part of a potential church writer or historian. However, the church needs to be made aware of the need and vote to put someone in charge of gathering supplies, materials, and resources. The church decision to officially begin collecting data will probably bring forth some prized pictures and documents that have been put away until church action approved the project. A church vote to research, write and publish a history of the local church clears the air for the church and the researchers involved.

Step three-Accountability

A system will need to be set up where pictures and materials may be loaned for research and copying. As soon as possible a committee of three, five, or seven people could be formed to oversee the work and set some guidelines for acquiring materials and proposing a budget.

Borrowed materials should be carefully documented, copied and returned as quickly as possible. A proposed budget should include enough money for acid free file folders, a filing cabinet, picture envelopes, and boxes. There are numerous vendors available who can provide these and other materials and a phone call or email request to the Florida Baptist Historical Society could produce specific answers to your requests as needed.

Step four-Work Place

It is important to have an area that is established as the historical committee work place. It may be only one table, a few chairs, a small book case, and a file cabinet, but this should be a protected area. All church property and documents belong to the church but it is best to have this work space under lock and key with a key in the church office. Pictures, church minutes, video tapes, and all electronic record materials need to be stored in a dry, light free, safe space. A portable electric heater could be in the room as needed for winter comfort.

The work place and materials belong to the church. Church minutes and church property should not be taken home. The work place is provided for a clean, safe working environment to protect the historical documents of the church. Do not mark the room location for security purposes and make sure the area is cool and dry.

Step five-Supplies

An 8 ½ x 11 inch filing system is best. Research paper, photographs, news articles and bulletins fit nicely in the letter size file folder.

It is not necessary to buy any expensive equipment. It is more feasible to use the church copier and the camera equipment of a willing member than to purchase these things. Usually a church has someone who is willing to act as church photographer, who is already interested in that aspect of historical documentation.

Even churches with large budgets soon find that there are church members gifted in the electronics who will assist with their own ideas

and equipment if asked. Money will need to be budgeted usually for basic film processing and copier paper. A beginning annual budget of \$500 should supply your basic needs.

Step six-Accession

Now fun officially begins. Purchase a note book or journal to record all items loaned or given to the church for the research project. Usually it is best to have a number for each item, date that it was loaned or donated, concise description of the item, storage location, and ultimate use of the item. This may seem tedious but it insures accountability in the gathering of valuable documents and can keep down possible disputes over item ownership and use. Memorials, gifts, pictorial identification, and artifact explanations are an important part of record keeping. Pictures need to be carefully documented with correct dates, names, and locations. Black leaded China marker pens may be purchased to write on the back of pictures.

Step seven-Gleaning Materials

It is amazing what some people keep in their trunks and attics. Pictures from 50 years ago and special event brochures become more valuable when they are shared with the whole congregation. Appealing for historical notes, records and mementoes can bring a treasure of love, memories, and facts for any archive committee that draws the net with tact and compassion. Keep good records of all gifts and loans.

Step eight-Inventory

Store all documents in a cool, dry place out of the light. If at all possible keep the materials in the church area that is exposed to the most hours of a pleasant range of cooling. There is no set rule but moisture is the worst enemy of your church documents. Arrange to have an 8 ½ x 11 folder in your file cabinet on each office and committee of your church. Folders are also needed on such ministries as music, youth,

children, Vacation Bible School, revivals, mission projects, WMU, Baptist Men, Sunday School, Discipleship Training and Buildings and Grounds.

Step nine-Microfilming

Many archivists are saying that compact discs, DVDs, video tapes and recordings can be a problem in the future. This is due to minimum shelf life and the lack of maintained equipment to draw up the sound and images. Microfilm is still the best medium to use to maintain records. The Florida Baptist Historical Society can assist you in having your documents microfilmed at the cost of about ten cents per page of 8 ½ x 11 material. The original documents and a microfilm copy can be returned to the church for local research as needed.

Step ten-Networking

One of the best ways to find out the best way to do something is to ask someone who is doing it. Sister churches in your association may be collecting data just as you are. Permit your association director of missions to be a resource for you in locating past associational records, statistics, pictures and listings. Check the index of other published Baptist church histories in your area to gain information on former pastors and staff members. Ask your local church librarian and your associational librarian to suggest local history books that would include church vignettes and histories. Visit the Florida Baptist Historical Society website at floridabaptisthistory.org for over 1,400 biographical sketches of local church leaders.

Step eleven-Reporting

At each business meeting of your local church, bring a progress report on your research and writing. This may be done in conjunction with the church council, church committees or library report. A committee that does not report, usually does not function. Present a

written report each month for the church clerk and place a copy of the report in the historical archives.

One of the most exciting ways to report your research to the church is through displays. Old glass display cases can be purchased in used business equipment stores for about \$500 each. There are upright display cases with adjustable glass shelves and horizontal cases with fewer shelves but a more hands-on look. Display important church brochures, bulletins, pictures, directories, gavels, hymnbooks and mission artifacts. Your people will appreciate it and it will stir up helpful interest in the church archives.

Step twelve-Publishing

The Florida Baptist Historical Society is prepared to assist you in research, writing, and the publication of your local church history. This is a ministry provided through the Florida Baptist State Convention Cooperative Program budget. Due to time and work constraints extensive hours of research and writing could be done on a cost-recovery basis. There are many good printers and publishers available. A 125 page paperback history book with pictures will probably cost about \$15 each including printing, binding, and shipping. Many churches sell their books at cost to recover the budget expense.

The Florida Baptist Historical Society is here to assist you in this noble work. Celebrating the past can help us in planning for the future. Our contact number is (800) 328-2660, extension 480; or email to jmw@fbhs.org.

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as of September 1, 2006

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5. Beauchamp, Vera
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7. Brock, Alcus
8. Brock, Betty
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16. Cunningham, Jan
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18. Davis, Hayward
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35. Graham, Ann
36. Green, Elouise*
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41. Jolly, Judith
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53. Mays, C.Parkhill, Jr.*
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55. Melton, Carolyne*
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57. Owens, Glen*
58. Peace River Bapt Assoc
59. Phillips, Jake
60. Phillips, Judy

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as of September 1, 2006

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63. Russell, Rosalie
64. Shaw, Frances*
65. Stinecipher, Grace
66. Stokes, Eugene
67. Stokes, Geraldine
68. Sullivan, John*
69. Sumners, Bill
70. Suttles, Charles*
71. Talley, Charles*
72. Thomas, Mrs. S. D.
73. Ware, E. W.
74. Watford, David
75. Watford, Doyle
76. Watford, Helen
77. Watford, Laura
78. Weeks, Rose Marie
79. Wicksell, Carolyn
80. Windsor, Jerry*
81. Windsor, Jerry Mae*
82. Windsor, John Mark*
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Florida Baptist Historical Society



Building on our Heritage

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- * actively support Florida Baptist research
- * receive *Then & Now* monthly newsletter
- * receive our annual journal issue on Florida Baptist work
- * encourage seminary students in church history study
- * invitation to attend all *FBHS* meetings and seminars

Request for Membership

The Florida Baptist Historical Society is a member-based society of individuals, churches, associations, and institutions interested in Florida Baptist history. Annual membership dues are as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Student | \$ 10 |
| Individual | \$ 15 |
| Joint (Husband and Wife) | \$ 25 |
| Church or Association | \$ 35 |
| Institution | \$ 50 |
| Lifetime Membership..... | \$250 |

Make your check for membership dues payable to FBHS: Mail to Florida Baptist Historical Society; 5400 College Drive; Graceville, FL 32440

For additional information call (800) 328-2660, ext. 480

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