

*Our Mission: Researching, preserving and promoting the Legacy of Florida Baptists*

PO Box 95 ~ Graceville, Florida 32440

Telephone: 850-360-4179~ E-mail: society2@floridabaptisthistory.org ~ web: floridabaptisthistory.org

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*LEGACY, as the monthly newsletter of the Florida Baptist Historical Society, has as its mission to highlight the legacy forged by the people and events in Florida Baptist history. During 2023, the LEGACY's monthly issues will feature brief personal profiles of selected Florida Baptist men and women, who through their Christian commitment, have demonstrated Legacy Leadership in their ministry service on the Florida Baptist mission field. These persons, could join with the Apostle Paul, in declaring as "God's fellow workers" they have "laid a foundation" for God's kingdom on earth and upon which "someone else is building" [II Corinthians 3:9-10NIV].*

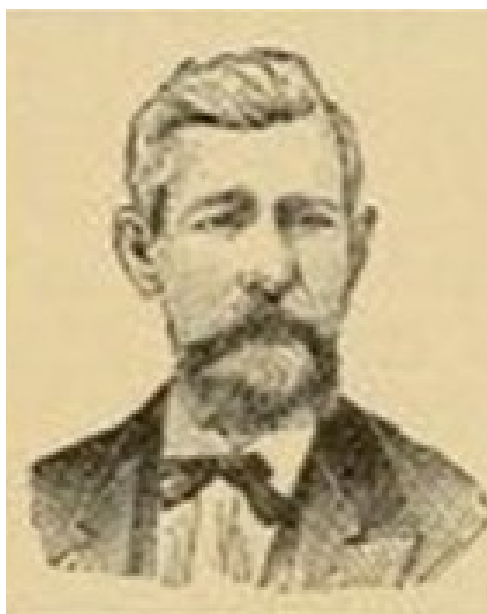
### Andrew M. Manning: Physician-Turned-Preacher

“Under a sense of his [spiritually] lost condition as a sinner, and with a believing apprehension of the finished righteousness of Christ as his only hope of salvation, he presented himself” making a profession of faith in Christ, reported a biographer of the life of Andrew M. Manning. The young 23-year-old Manning, whose public profession of faith led to a career in medicine and ministry, became the third generation of Mannings who were continuously engaged in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### The Son and Grandson of Baptist Preachers

Andrew May Manning was born in Butler county, Alabama, as the son and grandson of Baptist preachers who had migrated from North Carolina. His parents Benjamin, Jr. (b. 1799; d. 1859), and Sylvania Manning, first moved from North Carolina to Washington county, Georgia, in 1800 with the senior Benjamin Manning family. **As a first-generation Baptist preacher, Benjamin, Sr., (b. 1760; d. 1831) professed Christ in 1801.** He was baptized and responded to the call of God,

then was ordained into the gospel ministry in 1809. From 1811 to 1823, he served bi-vocationally as a farmer and pastor of the Bethlehem Church in Washington county. In 1823 the senior Manning resigned the church pastorate and re-located his family to Butler county, Alabama. Subsequently the senior Manning moved his large family and entourage of slaves to Jefferson county, Florida, where he secured in 1827 three parcels of land to farm. It was there that Benjamin Manning, Sr. became an early bi-vocational farmer-pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, then located on the Casa Blanca Plantation, south of Monticello.



Meanwhile back in Butler county, Alabama, the senior Manning's fourth of eight children, Benjamin, Jr., (b. 1795; d. 1859), in 1819 married his Edgecombe, N.C. childhood sweetheart Sylvania Little (b. 1801; d. 1870). The couple, along with Manning's first cousin Elijah L. Manning, soon thereafter, in 1821, followed Manning, Sr., by migrating first to Washington county, Ga., and then to Butler county, Ala. Over the next 19 years Benjamin, Jr., and Sylvia had 11 children.

Before leaving Butler county, their son Andrew May Manning was born on March 8, 1830. And following the path of the Senior Manning, Benjamin, Jr. moved his family to Jefferson county, Florida. In 1831 Benjamin, Jr. purchased from his father land near Foshalee Slough and Lake Iamonia in Leon county. By the 1850 Federal Census, the farm's acreage had increased by additional purchases to require as many as 25 slaves to maintain what was then called Mannington.

### **Benjamin Manning, Jr, Surrenders to the Ministry**

The farm was only nine miles from the **Indian Spring [sic] Baptist Church** (org. 1829), in Leon county's Miccosukee settlement. It was the sixth Baptist church established in the Florida Territory since 1821. The church's founding pastor was Theophilus Hardie (b.1795; d. 1833). Interestingly, Pastor Hardie was a native of North Carolina and in 1820 was living in Washington county, Georgia, where he likely became acquainted with the Manning family, both Senior and Junior Benjamin.

However, after attending the Indian Spring Church for several years, in March, 1839, **Benjamin Jr., responded to the call of God to commit his life to the preaching ministry, as a bi-vocational farmer-itinerant preacher.** Manning became the first person ordained to the ministry by the Indian Spring Church which was performed by then Pastor John Butler Lacy (b. 1790; d.1860). Andrew Manning was nine years old when his father was ordained. Forty years later, Andrew was called to serve as the pastor of the Indian Spring Church.

### **Country Doctor Andrew Manning**

As Benjamin Manning, Jr., became a significant planter in the county, he determined his sons should be educated by an institution of higher learning. As a result, Manning sent two of his seven sons – Reuben (b. 1827; d. 1895) and Andrew (b. 1830; d. 1907) – to the recently opened in 1848 the Fletcher Institute, located in Thomasville, Ga. Upon completing the basic curriculum within two years, Andrew decided to become a physician. He enrolled in the Medical Department at the University of Louisiana. The two years' course of study involved lectures and observation of surgical procedures. He received a medical degree in 1852.

**Returning to Leon county, Andrew Manning set up a medical practice and embarked upon a career as a country doctor for the neighboring plantations and farming families.** Having been given religious instruction as a child, combined by the life influences of his grandfather and father, Andrew began to give serious thought to the direction of his spiritual life. At the age of 23, Andrew made a profession of faith in Christ before the Oak Grove Baptist Church, located in the Miccosukee settlement, and was baptized by Pastor G. R. Moore.

On July 25, 1855, he married Emily Blackshear Raines of Thomas county, Ga. Within the next five years, three children were born into the family: a son, Edward (1856); a second son, Lucian (1857); and a daughter, Ann Elizabeth (1860). Eight years later, a second daughter, Sylvia May (1868) was born to the couple. Unfortunately, in that same year, their first daughter, Ann Elizabeth, at age eight, died of an unrecorded cause.

### **Licensed and Ordained to Preach**

The February, 1859, death of his father, Benjamin Jr., may have made a profound impact upon Andrew Manning's spiritual pilgrimage. By 1860 Manning decided to commit his life to the preaching ministry. **He presented a testimony on his call to the ministry and preached at the Olive Baptist Church, whereupon the church licensed him. The following year, the church ordained Andrew.** [At the time the church was located in Thomas county, Ga., but as a result of Congressional action to move the state boundary line between Georgia and Florida, that portion of south Georgia's Thomas county was transferred to Florida and became a part of northern Jefferson county.]



As was typical of the time period, most Baptist preachers had to rely on either farming or an additional profession to support their family, inasmuch as many churches did not pay their pastors. Between 1856 and 1863, Andrew acquired farmland in Jefferson county either through gifts from his father and family, as well as land he purchased through the federal homestead act.

### **Brief Service to the Confederacy**

Soon after the War Between the States was under way, Andrew Manning at age 32, enlisted as a private in the Florida Calvary. However, his medical training did not go unnoticed, and by 1863 he was assigned to serve as the chief surgeon at the Medical College Hospital in Atlanta. In an unusual turn of events, perhaps Providential, **Manning was soon transferred back to Leon county and assigned to use his large farm to produce grain for the Confederacy.** True to his calling to the gospel ministry, Andrew Manning, during the war period, travelled throughout north Florida and south Georgia, serving as an itinerant preacher for the destitute churches that had lost its male members and pastoral leadership to the war effort.

### **Post War Ministry**

By 1868, with the affects of the Civil War still being felt by many churches particularly due to the lack of pastoral leadership, **Andrew Manning was serving as part-time pastor of three churches. These included the New Ochlocknee Church in Thomasville, Ga.; the Oak Grove Church, Leon county; and the Olive Church, near Monticello,** in Jefferson county. While serving these churches, Manning was active in the Florida Baptist Association. His heart for sharing the gospel was expressed in a proposal he made during the association's 1868 annual meeting. The *Minutes* note that Manning, "made some pointed and earnest remarks in relation to the employment of a missionary to travel" within the association's boundaries. He proposed the raising of funds to support the missionary effort. The delegates wholeheartedly supported the proposal and the Association's Executive Committee, earmarked funds from the treasury to combine with other funds to be raised for the missionary endeavor.

**Manning's leadership in the Florida Association resulted in him being elected moderator in 1870 and continuously being re-elected for the next ten years.** By 1879 Manning was serving as pastor of the Indian Spring Baptist Church (pictured), a post he held until November 4, 1906. Concurrently, the association hired Manning as the missionary to Wakulla county. By September 1885 he was preaching regularly at Crawfordville. In 1897 the association hired Manning to serve as pastor of a small church in Quincy, which he grew to 21 from an initial five members. During the last decades of the nineteenth century Manning also served Leon county churches at Pine Hill and Centreville; in addition to the Concordia Church in Gadsden county.

James Bryant in his narrative on Andrew Manning, repeated several characterizations about Manning's preaching abilities, that were made by Manning's contemporaries. "He makes no pretensions for being what is called an eloquent divine; but as a minister he is most acceptable," said one observer. And like so many pastors of that era, Manning exemplified faithfulness to the gospel although, "he had no gift for building up the church," noted fellow Pastor John A. Scruggs. However, **within the Florida Association the physician-turned-preacher "had gained a reputation as a revival preacher among country churches."** He died January 9, 1907, leaving a legacy of serving nearly one-half century in the ministry.

[RESOURCES: James C. Bryant, *Indian Spring: The Story of a Pioneer Church in Leon County, Florida*, (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1971); *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia with Biographical Compendium and Portrait Gallery of Baptist Ministers*, (The Christian Index, 1881); Folks Huxford, *Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia, Vol. VI*. (Jesup, GA: Jesup Sentinel, 1971); Florida Baptist Association *Annuals*, 1860 – 1905; and Manning family biographical profiles posted on website [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com).]