

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

Visit our website at FloridaBaptistHistory.org

Simmons, Lacy James lived in the Dooly County, Georgia in the 1840s before going to Thomas County, Georgia, in the 1850s where he is named in a few church minutes. In one census he is listed as minister Midway MB. He was in Marion County, Florida, at Moss Bluff in the 1880 census of Florida. Simmons is listed in the 1851 *Minutes* of the Florida Baptist Association as the pastor of Union Church in Thomas County, Georgia and he is listed in a church history as a pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Socrum, 1871-1875. Simmons reportedly married a Creek or Cherokee Indian woman who died in childbirth with a son named James. He then married Nancy and together they raised quite a large family. He died in 1893.

Bethel Baptist Church History

Lakeland

SYLVESTER WALDEN

1869-1871 and 1875-1877

Reverend Walden was born on December 22, 1822, in Twiggs County, Georgia. He joined the Hainseville Baptist Church of Houston County, Georgia, when he was eighteen years old. He was called to the ministry by order of the Union Spring Baptist Church of Dooly County, Georgia, and was ordained April 3, 1853.

He moved from Pulaski County to Clinch County, Georgia, in 1858, where he labored as a missionary of the Houston Association for five years. Brother Walden came to Hillsborough County, Florida, in 1867 being just at the close of the war and resumed the work of the master amid privations, assisting in the organization of the South Florida Baptist Association here at Bethel.

Brother Walden accomplished great good as pastor throughout many localities, one being pastor of Bethel Baptist Church from 1869-1871 and again in 1875-1877. He was a very active, dedicated and beloved worker for Bethel Church and the Lord. He died on October 6, 1893.

L. J. SIMMONS

1871-1875

Reverend L. J. Simmons died full of years and labors for the Lord on August 18, 1893. Before the decrepitude of age stole over him, he was a most active and aggressive preacher of righteousness.

He invaded the enemy country and carried the war into Africa. The "What said the Lord" was a watch word of his life. He was a strict constructionist of the Bible. He believed it to be God's truth and thus taught it and his praise is still, and will remain, in our midst. Brother Simmons served as pastor of Bethel from 1871 until 1875.

Thank you so much for this most interesting information. Usually the family has quite a bit more history of persons than we do. We typically have associational minutes of churches and associations, but not much on individuals. We are always happy to add to our file folders on individuals.

We feel we are doubly blessed to get a picture of a pioneer Baptist preacher whose work and ministry was the foundation of our Baptist heritage and so enriches our lives.

Jan Cunningham

-----Original Message-----

From: mapost28@intergate.com [mailto:mapost28@intergate.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2004 1:10 PM

To: FBHSPT1

Subject: Re: Lacy Simmons

Jan, I am sorry that I don't have a picture of Lacy Simmons. He was also at several other churches in GA. He is in the minutes of New Hope Baptist Church

in Thomas Co. GA in the Sept. 1855 minutes I found in a booklet called "RootsHunters" about Thomas Co. He went to Florida and served as moderator for the South Florida Baptist Association from 1867-1874. He served

Shiloh Baptist Church in Plant City, FL from 1872-1874 and then went to Camden

Co.GA.to serve in the Hebron Baptist Church near Kingsland. He performed several marriages in Polk County from 1878-1888.. Also he moved to Hillsborough Co. FL in the 1870's. His son, Lacy W. Simmons was also a minister

and is mentioned in the minutes of Hebron Baptist Church in Camden Co. I have gradually traced him all over GA and FL. If he had to go by buggy or horseback he did a lot of traveling that way.

I am curious as to how you got his date of death. A Florida researcher found

an obit that listed his death as Jul 16, 1896. I am totally confused about his

death and we cannot find where he is buried either.

Thank you for your help. Martha Post (All of my research has been from the archives records at the Polk County Historical Library. They have lot of resources here.

This mail sent through IMP: <http://horde.org/imp/>

Martha,

I believe we used the Florida Baptist Convention Annual, 1894, p. 40, as our source for the death date. I'll go to the library and check it for you. It may be tomorrow before I can find the information for you.

The actual wording is: "In the South Florida Association we notice the deaths of Elders L. J. Simmons and S. Walden, fathers in Israel, full of good works and called up higher at a ripe old age."

Jan Cunningham

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This mail sent through IMP: <http://horde.org/imp/>

Dear Martha

Thank you very much for sending these emails giving us the history of Lacy Simmons. We are filing them in his file folder. Please keep them coming as you come across additional information.

Jan Cunningham

-----Original Message-----

From: mapost28@intergate.com [mailto:mapost28@intergate.com]

Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2004 7:51 PM

To: FBHSPT1

Subject: RE: Rev. Lacy J. Simmons

Jan, I lost track of Lacy after 1885. He must have gone back to Hillsborough Co. because he performed some marriages there in the 1890's. He was a travelin' man. I guess they had trains back then, I am trying to put together how they moved around so much. He may have gone to Marion County for growing oranges. I read about that in the history of Marion County and he was a farmer at times. In the Cork area near Plant City in the 1870's we think he was involved in growing oranges as well as supplying as pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church. I have written the First Baptist Church of Plant City that evolved from Shiloh and they haven't responded. That was months ago. I was hoping they had him in their history. He was very active in the South Florida Baptist Association's beginnings. I found reference to his being moderator for seven years.

Thank you for looking up all you could. I will keep searching and maybe I'll get lucky as in the past, just looking through periodicals and coming upon his name in our historical library.

You have been very kind with your time, Martha

This mail sent through IMP: <http://horde.org/imp/>

file Lacy J. Simmons

June 30, 2004

Dear Martha

We love it when we find a little nugget of history here and there, and sorry when we don't.

Our office staff (Melissa) has looked in the Marion County Baptist Association minutes from the years of 1885-1900 and has found no mention of the Rev. Lacy J. Simmons. She also researched anything to do with Ocklawaha Bridge Baptist Church and didn't find any mention of him there.

Jan Cunningham

-----Original Message-----

From: mapost28@intergate.com [mailto:mapost28@intergate.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 27, 2004 9:02 PM
To: FBHSPT1
Subject: Rev. Lacy J. Simmons

Jan, I am going to impose on your research skills again if I may. In the Marion Co. FL census of 1880, my gg grandfather, the Rev. Lacy J. Simmons, is in Moss Bluff. I have just been on the internet digging around in the Marion Co. history pages and came across their church beginnings. One of the oldest Baptist churches was the Ocklawaha Bridge Baptist Church in the Ocala National Forest. In 1855 they built a sanctuary and in 1885 the church moved to it's present location on East State Rd. 40. In studying about Moss Bluff I found that it is near the Ocklawaha River. My query is: how can I find out if this is where my gg grandfather may have been serving as a minister. Would you have any records of the churches (Baptist) in Marion Co. during the 1880's and if Rev. L.J. Simmons was indeed involved with any of them? There is currently a Moss Bluff Baptist Church and I plan to write them about my gg grandfather. I don't know when this church was established. It seems that Lacy was like a church planter type minister. He surely did move around a lot and he had about a dozen children!

I appreciate any help you may give and this may add to your handbook you are compiling as well. (I don't have a picture of Lacy, but I am wondering if one of the churches he served may have one. Our church has pictures of the first ministers from the 1860's)

Thank you again, Martha Post, Bartow, FL

This mail sent through IMP: <http://horde.org/imp/>

Jan Cunningham

-----Original Message-----

From: mapost28@intergate.com [mailto:mapost28@intergate.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2004 6:37 PM

To: FBHSPT1

Subject: RE: Lacy Simmons

Jan, I would greatly appreciate your finding the information about his death. He was supposedly listed in the Turkey Creek Baptist Church records near Plant City, FL as having died in Aug. of 1893. How this obituary turned up in the Tampa Weekly of his death being Jul 1896 is a mystery. Some ancestral relatives of my Lacy are going to check at Turkey Creek.

I have some very interesting information that I have gathered about my gg grandfather. It seems that he married a Creek or Cherokee Indian woman first before he married my gg grandmother Nancy. His first wife died in childbirth with a son named James. There are no records of the marriage that anyone can find. He lived in Dooly Co. GA in the 1840's before going to Thomas Co. GA in the 1850's where he is named in a few church minutes. In one census he is listed as minister Midway MB. I don't know where Midway is. I have found many Midways on the Google search engine. He was in Marion Co. FL at Moss Bluff in the 1880 census of FL. I wonder if he had a church there? He is a mysterious fellow and of course when my great grandfather was born Lacy was 49 years old. I knew my great grandfather Joseph Simmons who died when I was 13. Rev. Lacy J. Simmons must have been named after his great grandfather who was Lacy J. Simmons also. The J. stands for James. Lacy Simmons fathered quite a large family during his lifetime.

Well, I didn't mean to take up so much space and time. I just hope it is useful in any way. Thank you again for your interest.
Martha

This mail sent through IMP: <http://horde.org/imp/>

1894 FBC annual

The report on Deceased Ministers was resubmitted, and after tributes by J. L. Ryan, J. E. Holley, A. P. Pugh, W. H. Strickland, T. J. Sparkman, A. C. Turner, E. J. Hull, F. C. McConnell, B. A. Geiger, W. B. Dye, W. Gwynn, W. W. Head, and prayer by the President, was adopted:

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON DECEASED MINISTERS.

We, your Committee, beg leave to report as follows:

The year just past has been marked by a thinning of our ranks.

In the South Florida Association we notice the deaths of Elders L. J. Simmons and S. Walden, fathers in Israel, full of good works and called up higher at a ripe old age.

In the Pensacola Bay Association we note the deaths of F. C. Waite and J. H. Wentworth, good men and true.

In the Marion Association Bro. A. H. Moore has been called up higher.

In the Wekiva Association we lament the death of Rev. W. D. Jolley, the efficient pastor of the Apopka church.

In the Alachua Association that father in Israel, Joshua Perry, though dead, yet speaketh. He is the last one of the Perry brothers, pioneer preachers. These all rest in the hope of the blessed resurrection. Your Committee recommend that a page in our Minutes be dedicated to their memory.

In the Hamilton Association we lament the falling asleep of Bro. J. N. Reid, one of the most consecrated and efficient ministers in the State.

Respectfully submitted,

P. W. CORR,
R. H. WHITEHEAD,
T. J. SPARKMAN,
L. W. KICKLITER,
B. A. GEIGER,
D. O. THRASHER,
T. W. WILDER.

Committee.