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.

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Smith, Columbus (1833-1875) was a native of North Carolina. He was ordained in 1856 in Monticello, Florida by D. G. Daniel and William B. Cooper. Smith served as pastor of churches in Mississippi and Florida including Monticello Baptist Church and Indian Springs Baptist Church, Tallahassee, 1864-1865. He and his wife, Sallie Harris Smith had five children.

Pastors of Indian Springs Baptist Church

829	Theophilus Hardie		
830	Theophilus Hardie	1870	Chas. D. Campbell
831	Theophilus Hardie	1871	Chas. D. Campbell
832	Theophilus Hardie	1872	(not listed)
833	Theophilus Hardie	1873	(not listed)
834	John B. Lacy	1874	(not listed)
835	John B. Lacy	1875	(not listed)
1836	John B. Lacy	1876	(not listed)
837	John B. Lacy	1877	J. R. Kimbrew
1838	John B. Lacy	1878	Stephen S. Proctor
1839	Lacy; Broome	1879	Andrew M. Manning
1840	John B. Broome	1880	Andrew M. Manning
1841	John B. Broome	1881	Andrew M. Manning
1842	John B. Broome	1882	Andrew M. Manning
1843	Jesse Goodman	1883	Andrew M. Manning
1844	Buckley S. Fuller	1884	Andrew M. Manning
1845	Buckely S. Fuller	1885	Andrew M. Manning
1846	Buckley S. Fuller	1886	Andrew M. Manning
1847	Buckley S. Fuller	1887	Andrew M. Manning
1848	Buckley S. Fuller	1888	Andrew M. Manning
1849	Buckley S. Fuller	1889	Wm. M. Reynolds
1850	Buckley S. Fuller	1890	Reynolds; Manning
1851	Buckley S. Fuller	1891	Andrew M. Manning
1852	Buckley S. Fuller	1892	Andrew M. Manning
1853	Buckley S. Fuller	1893	Andrew M. Manning
1854	Wiley Blewett	1894	Andrew M. Manning
1855	Wiley Blewett	1895	Andrew M. Manning
1856	Wiley Blewett	1896	Andrew M. Manning
1857	Wiley Blewett	1897	Andrew M. Manning
1858	William B. Cooper	1898	Andrew M. Manning
1859	William B. Cooper	1899	Andrew M. Manning
1860	William B. Cooper	1900	Andrew M. Manning
1861	William B. Cooper	1901	Andrew M. Manning
1862	William B. Cooper	1902	Andrew M. Manning
[illegible]	William B. Cooper	1903	Andrew M. Manning
1864	Columbus Smith	1904	Andrew M. Manning
1865	Columbus Smith	1905	Andrew M. Manning
[illegible]	[illegible]	1906	Manning; Crockett
1867	Wiley Blewett	1907	Stephen C. Crockett
1868	Wiley Blewett	1908	J. D. Bohannon
1869	Chas. D. Campbell	1909	J. D. Bohannon
1911	E. T. Moore	1941	T. J. Barnett
1912	E. T. Moore	1942	T. J. Barnett
1913	E. T. Moore	1943	T. J. Barnett
1914	E. T. Moore	1944	T. J. Barnett
1915	E. T. Moore	1945	Barnett; Hart
1916	R. A. Morgan	1946	A. T. Hart
1917	R. C. Moore	1947	Hart; Waters
1918	(none)	1948	E. Lavelle Waters
1919	R. A. Smith	1949	E. Lavelle Waters
1920	(none)	1950	J. Robert Whidden
1921	– Brooks	1951	Walton Grady
1922	W. J. Adair	1952	Walton Grady
1923	W. J. Adair	1953	Grady; E. S. Rich
1924	(none)	1954	E. S. Rich
1925	(none)	1955	E. S. Rich
1926	E. T. Dawson	1956	Rich; Browning
1927	E. T. Dawson	1957	James W. Browning
1928	E. T. Dawson	1958	John W. Alford
1929	E. T. Dawson	1959	Alford; Butler Horton
1930	J. T. Mashburn	1960	Horton; Pat C. Kennicott
1931	J. T. Mashburn	1961	Kennicott; Gene Tyree
1932	W. J. Glover	1962	Gene Tyree
1933	Glover; Connell	1963	Tyree; Hancock
1934	Joseph G. Connell	1964	Millard Hancock
1935	Joseph G. Connell	1965	Hancock; Hanberry
1936	Joseph G. Connell	1966	Jack A. Hanberry; Brower
1937	Joseph G. Connell	1967	Dwight Brower
1938	Connell; Barnett	1968	James E. Riherd
1939	T. J. Barnett	1969	Riherd; Richardson
		1970	Frederick Richardson
		1971	Frederick Richardson

A New Generation Begins

While the church records went blank during the War, the Leon County public records demonstrate that the life cycle was continuing and a new generation was emerging for Indian Springs. John Cason's eighteen-year old daughter Susan may have fancied a flirtation with a Union Captain in May 1865, but by September 12 she was married to Frank Bunker. The ceremony was performed by Pastor Columbus Smith.[2]

This particular marriage, by the way, has some interest for local historians in that it happens to be the first wedding to be recorded in the Leon Marriage Book following the South's defeat. Some clerk has noted the occasion in the same pen and ink as the original entry, numbered #1364: "First license recorded since the surrender."

The 3,000 acre Little Egypt Plantation, together with its many horses, mules, cattle, hogs, sheep and all the furnishings of the house had been left to Susan. She and her husband would try to keep it alive though the effort would prove a vain endeavor.

Henry Clay Billingsley

Another of those ragged and battle-weary soldiers making his way back home after the War was Henry Clay Billingsley. He had been wounded in battle three times and would be cripple for the rest of his life. Even as he made his halting steps homeward it was with the consciousness that he was going home to a different world, for his father had died less than two years earlier. Henry's father had been among the earliest settlers of Leon County, as the marriage book testifies by its early record of John P. Billingsley's marriage to Anna Smith in 1829.

Henry was born in Leon County on April 1, 1839, during the excitement of Indian raids. But he was a grown man of 23 by the time he and Susan Cason were baptized together on June 28, 1862, in Long Pond. He married Martha E. Hall on October 11, 1866, in a ceremony performed by Methodist pastor John C. Ley. They would bear five children: (1) Eddie Lee, (2) John P., (3) Mattie Johnston, (4) Emma, and (5) Fellows.

The Indian Springs church early recognized his leadership ability by ordaining Billingsley a deacon in the 1860's. He was first mentioned in the record as a messenger with Solomon Sills to Concord in 1867. In 1900 he became church clerk for seven years. He died on February 4, 1914.

And in April 1903, Henry C. Billingsley had been a candidate for Doorkeeper in the House of Representatives. He was then recommended to the Baptists of Florida as "a Confederate veteran, a worthy Christian Gentleman" and one who "merits the support of the members of the house."[3]

Indian Springs deacons Walter Averitt and John Arthur Scruggs drew up a resolution in Henry's honor and dedicated a memorial page to him in the church book. "Billingsley was not a well educated man," Mr. Scruggs commented, "but he was very smart and a good worker. Whenever he attended the annual meetings, he was always recognized."

8. I. M. Allen, *The United States Baptist Annual Register and Almanac* (Philadelphia, 1852), 48. At its annual meeting in 1854, the Florida Association pledged $220 to help build a church at Tallahassee.

9. S. M. Provence, "Some Tallahassee History," *Florida Baptist Witness* (March 23, 1916), 5.

10. *Florida Baptist Association Minutes* (1854).

11. Long Pond continued to be the place for baptisms until recent years when the county road was closed. It is located just a few yards south of U. S. #90, though the heavy foliage makes it invisible from the highway.

12. The building had been constructed for nearly five years when the deed was recorded in Leon County *Deed Book M*, p. 275 (dated April 26, 1859).

13. *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia with Biographical Compendium*, 37. The entry shows a portrait.

14. *Christian Index* (October 26, 1854), 171.

15. *Florida Baptist Witness* (Oct. 16, 1901), 1.

16. *Christian Index* (Nov. 13, 1884), 8.

17. *Christian Index* (July 3, 1879).

18. A. C. McCants, *Florida Baptist Association Minutes* (1880).

19. *Florida Baptist Convention Annual* (1860), 22.

20. W. N. Chaudoin, "Reminiscences", *Florida Baptist Witness* (July 23, 1902).

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. Susan Bradford Eppes, *Through Some Eventful Years*, 1926, ed. Joseph D. Cushman, Jr., Floridiana Facsimile and Reprint Series (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), 145.

24. *Florida Baptist Witness* (Feb. 21, 1905), 2.

25. *Christian Index* (Jan. 30, 1890), 4.

26. *Florida Association Minutes* (1862).

27. *Florida Association Minutes* (1863).

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. Susan Eppes, *Through Some Eventful Years*, 271.

2. Columbus Smith had been ordained in Monticello, Fla., by D. G. Daniel and Wm. B. Cooper in 1856. *Christian Index*, Nov. 26, 1856. He was called as pastor for one year at Monticello after ordination.

3. *Florida Baptist Witness*, March 4, 1903. See also the church Resolution on his death, *ibid* (April 2, 1914), p. 10.

4. *Florida Baptist Association Minutes* (1867).

5. *Florida Baptist Witness* (July 2, 1902), 1.

6. *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, 101-2.

7. *Christian Index* (Feb. 3, 1870), 18.

8. *Inventory of the County Archives of Florida*, No. 37, 10.

9. *Ibid.*

10. H. C. Rippey, "Description of Leon County," *The Semi-Tropical*, II (July 1876), 396-406.

11. *Ibid*, 403.

12. *Christian Index* (July 7, 1870), 102.

13. *Christian Index* (Jan. 4, 1872), 3.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Christian Index* (Jan. 19, 1871), 10.

17. *Florida Baptist Association Minutes* (1873), 9.

18. *Christian Index* (May 1, 1879), 8.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Florida Baptist Association Minutes* (1876), 9.

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INDIAN SPRINGS: THE STORY OF A PIONEER CHURCH IN LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

by

James C. Bryant, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
Department of English

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
Tallahassee
1971

Florida Baptist Historic
Society

PASTORS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, MONTICELLO, FLORIDA

Rev. R.J. Mays ✓	1841 - 1855 (first pastor)
Rev. Sidney Linton	1855 - 1858
Rev. S. Havens	1858
Rev. W.B. Cooper	1858
Rev. B.S. Fuller	1858 - 1903 ✓
Rev. H. Ardis	1903
Rev. Columbus Smith	1904
Rev. N.A. Bailey	1904 - 1908
Rev. Stephen Crockett	1908 - 1909
Rev. W.F. Moore ✓	1910 - 1912
Rev. B.A. Geiges	1912 - 1913
Rev. Scott Patterson	1914
Rev. J.W. Kesterson	1914 - 1917
Rev. A.J. Kroelinger	1917 - 1918
Rev. P.T. Taylor	1918 - 1919
Rev. B.G. Smith	1919 - 1921
Rev. J.K. Hutchings ✓	1922 - 1936
Rev. R.B. Mayfield ✓	1936 - 1941
Rev. B.A. Roth	1941 - 1943
Rev. Humphrey O. Hughes ✓	1944 - 1955
Rev. Ellis Turner	1956 - 1963
Rev. LeRoy Curry	1964 - 1966
Dr. Ray Newcomb	1967 - 1971
Dr. Jere L. Hendricks ✓	1972 - 1976
Dr. Mark E. McCoy ✓	1977 - 1978
Rev. Paul B. Williamson	1979 - 1986
Dr. Nathan L. Boles	1987 - 2001
Dr. Jim Nalls	2003 - 2004
Thermon E. Moore ✓	2004 - Present

✓ Longest tenure as pastor (45 years)

ASSOCIATE PASTORS

Rev. Charles Hinson	1976 - 1980
Rev. Richard Phipps	1981 - 1985
Rev. Jeff Whitty	1986 - 1990
Rev. Steve W. Kegley	1990 - 1995
Rev. Ron Kegley	1993 - 1994
Rev. Randy Powell	1996 -
Dr. Ron Bonds	1997 - 1999

PRESENT ORDAINED DEACONS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Dan Allen
E.S. Blair
Wallace Blount
Leon Burnett
Bruce Chase
Curtis Clark
Leon Clark
Bill Counts
Dr. Charles Crocker
Henry DeVane
Charles Elkins
Gary Fulford
Lewis Getch
Clyde Griffin
Curt Hall
Kyle Hill
Jerry Horne
Bob Jarvis
Bruce McCall
Bill Naylor
Kaiser Oglesby
Frank Purvis
Joe Roberts
Fondren Roddenberry
Dr. Jim Sledge
John Thrasher
Jim Ward
Mitchell Ward
Fred Wilder
Rodney Willis
Jack Wirick
Tom Wooten

Columbus Smith, on October 13, 1872, then residing at Tuskegee, Ala., was called to the pastorate of the Meridian Baptist church, now known as the First Baptist church of Meridian, Miss. As a man, he was of low stature, light hair, blue eyes, and rather florid complexion; broad mouth, prominent nose with large dilating nostrils when animated. He was of a nervous temperament and suffered much from indigestion. He was a native of Georgia, was reared an Episcopalian, was well educated, studied law and preached for a number of years with moderate success, but abandoned the profession of law at the age of thirty-two and entered upon the ministry. At the time he came to Meridian he was about forty-three years of age. He was a hard student, and his course of study covered the whole range of literature. He was fluent and animated. His imagination was vivid, his style easy and graceful, and at times when greatly moved his speech flowed like the mountain torrent, sparkling here and there with brilliant gems of metaphor and classic quotations. He was in every sense of the word a pulpit orator, far above the average, and the pews were always filled when he preached. He was a man of strong convictions, and deep sympathy, and the burden of his sermons was generally the way of salvation. In reading from the gospel the account of the crucifixion great tears have been seen to chase each other down his cheeks, which, added to his splendid reading, would often find response in the flowing tears of his audience. He was possessed of all the elements of a great preacher, and but for his untimely death would have become famous.

He was not a good pastor in the common acceptation of the word. He was too much given to communing with himself, his books and his God to give much time to what is called pastoral work, that is, visiting among the people and making himself agreeable and popular. Then his health, always precarious, would not admit of it; but he was ever ready to visit the sick and the distressed, and to pray with and comfort them. He was successively re-elected pastor for the years 1874 and 1875, these elections taking place in October of the years preceding. At the time of his election in October, 1874, he was in very bad health, and the church gave him leave of absence, and he went to Key West, Florida, under the belief that the

salt atmosphere, and, perhaps, a sea voyage, would restore him; but he grew steadily worse, and in December he tendered his resignation, which was accepted on the 6th of January, and a few days afterwards the sad news was received of his death. On the 20th of January, 1875, the church adopted resolutions respecting him, which are entered on pages 73 and 74 of the Minute Book of the church.

A good, noble, fearless, consecrated and learned minister of the gospel was called to his reward. "Well, done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joys of thy Lord." On the first Sabbath in March this year (1875) a memorial service in honor of the memory of Rev. Columbus Smith was held, at which Dr. E. B. Teague, of Alabama, preached the memorial sermon; able, eloquent and touching. The service was held in the new brick church, it being the first held in that church. Mr. Smith often chafed under the delay in getting into the new church, and looked forward with unfeigned delight to the day when it should be dedicated. His funeral service was the first held in it. To him

"Life's dream was past,
All its sin, its sadness;
Brightly at last
Dawned a day of gladness,"

Brighter to him than that which ushered in the dedication of the new church which he so much longed for. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."—Contributed by Capt. W. H. Hardy.

J. A. Snyder, an excellent minister of Christ of the Central Association, who now resides in Jackson, Miss., is a man about forty-five years of age. He was ordained by some church in the Union Association, July 12, 1872. The presbytery consisted of Revs. C. M. Gordon and S. Buffkin. He was pastor of churches in Franklin county, and, moving to Jefferson county, he was the esteemed pastor of Fellowship and Rodney churches. He was also for some years moderator of Union Association. After some years in the pastorate he moved to Clinton for the purpose of securing educational facilities for his son and daughter. While there, living in his own house, and serving neighboring churches, he pursued his own studies.

MISSISSIPPI

BAPTIST PREACHERS.

BY

L. S. FOSTER,

PASTOR OF SENATOBIA BAPTIST CHURCH,

SENATOBIA, MISSISSIPPI.

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The New Enterprise
Thu, Mar 28, 1907 ·Page 1

This editor wishes now to acknowledge his p rsonal obligation to Editor Thompson, of the Citizen, the Worthy Master of Dade Lodge, F & A. M., and Sexton Collins of the City Cemetery for their efforts which made it possible for me to have the melancholy pleasure of standing at the side of the grave where thirty-two years ago Rev. Columbus Smith, my father, remembered and loved by many now living in Madison, was buried. At the time of his death my father's home was in Meridian, Miss., where he was pastor of the First Baptist church. Being broken in health his church granted him a vacation and he sailed from New Orleans to Cuba for rest and recreation. Finding neither he started on his return home, but on reaching Key West found he could get no further. He was taken in charge by kind friends and brethren of the Masonic order. Every attention was showered upon him but to no avail, and on January 13th, 1875, his soul winged its flight to the God whom he had faithfully served. For some reason —to me unknown—his body could not be brought to his home, and he was burted in the lot of the Dade

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The New Enterprise
Thu, Mar 28, 1907 · Page 1

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found that of the Episcopal minister, Rev. J. L. Steele, who officiated at his funeral, he having died three years later of yellow fever. For the people of Key West, past and present, I have a tender spot in my heart.

While in the cemetery I visited the Government plot and saw the graves of between 40 and 60 victims of the Maine disaster whose bodies were recovered from Havana harbor and brought to this place for interment. A handsome monument has been erected in the plot to the memory of those who lost their lives at that time, the citizens of Key West having performed this act of patriotism and reverence.