

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

Sparkman, T. J. (1842-1916) served as a private in the Confederate Army. In 1880 Sparkman organized the first Sunday School of Hopewell Baptist Church, Plant City. He was the founder of First Baptist Church, Brandon, 1889 and served as pastor of Nocatee Baptist Church, 1890-1893, First Baptist Church, Wauchula, 1898-1899, Oak Grove Baptist Church, Wauchula, 1900, Spring Head Baptist Church, Plant City 1906-07, First Baptist Church, Sarasota, First Baptist Church, Punta Gorda and other churches in the Peace River Association.



T. J. Sparkman

HISTORY
OF
HARDEE COUNTY

BY
JEAN PLOWDEN



PRINTED BY
THE FLORIDA ADVOCATE

VII 1887 12 12

were settlements prior to that time, but after the railroad was built they began to grow and prosper. More about them will be given later.

There were few schools in what is now Hardee county as late as 1895. In that year we find, by reference to records now in the office of the superintendent of public instruction of DeSoto county, that a number of new schools were established by order of the school board.

An entry in the records dated June 4, 1895, shows the following new schools established:

Brushy Creek, located in section 15, township 34, range 24. W. P. Ritch was named supervisor.

Popash, with W. J. Jackson as supervisor.

Wauchula, with D. M. Cason as supervisor.

Florence, on Payne's Creek, with J. B. Sauls as supervisor.

The board ordered that schools may begin any time agreed upon by the patrons after July 1st.

T. J. Sparkman, long prominent as a school official and minister, was superintendent of instruction at that time.

A new school was established at the northeast quarter of section 7, township 33, range 24. John Bostick was supervisor. This was known as the Enterprise school.

On August 6, 1895, the following resolution was introduced into the minutes of the school board:

"Resolved, that it is the policy and purpose of the board to aid as far as possible in the building and furnish-

to time as the finances will permit till all are helped who need it.

"For this purpose the following appropriations are made:

"Oak Grove school building, \$100.

"Enterprise, \$30.00.

"Spring Hill, \$30.00."

On November 5, 1895, permission was granted to move Harmony school for the present year to the south side of Charlie Apopka creek.

C. J. Carlton was teacher of the school at that time, and his salary was \$50.00 a month. He had an assistant who was paid the salary of \$25.00 per month. The name of this assistant is not mentioned in the minutes. He perhaps had not been selected at that time.

The following other well-known citizens taught at schools as follows:

S. W. Conroy at Scott's school; Henry Smith at Lemon Grove; J. H. Brown at Enterprise; J. J. Parrish at Spring Hill; Joe Crews at Oak Grove; R. D. Moore as principal and Helen Carlton as assistant at Wauchula.

The board met on September 2, 1895, and selected the following grading committee for September examinations: R. D. Moore, C. J. Carlton and George W. Harp. The board appropriated \$100 to the Wauchula school on the following day, September 3, 1895.

On October 8, 1895, N. M. Bryan was appointed supervisor at Bowling Green.

On January 2, 1896, Lemon Grove school was moved to its present location, being moved a mile and a quarter east.

The Florida Southern Railway was built through Wauchula in the spring of 1886, and immediately thereafter the tide of new settlers became swollen.

An interesting account of the town in its infancy is given in a Tampa paper dated September 19, 1888. The clipping reads as follows:

"This village is a regular station on the Florida Southern Railway in DeSoto county, at a point 51 miles north of Punta Gorda and 25 miles south of Bartow. It has five general merchandise stores, one drug store, a post office, and one excellent shoemaker, with shop in operation. It has a most admirably managed hotel, a first-class physician, a depot under the control of an agent who keeps freight, passenger and telegraphic departments in excellent order.

"The Missionary Baptists and Methodists have organized churches. The Sunday schools have about 100 regular scholars enrolled, and meet every Sunday.

"The public school numbers 120 scholars, under Rev. T. J. Sparkman, principal, and Miss Mary A. Payne, assistant, each of whom is highly esteemed here. There is also a prosperous Masonic lodge here.

"Rich lands are in great abundance on the east and west of town, interspersed with orange groves so numerous and well-developed as to constitute the chief basis for wealth, present and prospective.

"Wauchula furnishes a vast amount of railway timbers, such as crossties and pilings. The only water power exist mill in South Florida is located

business here several years, and another near at hand.

"The Scott Phosphate Works, now in successful operation, gives employment to many hands, distributes thousands of dollars, and will long continue so to do.

"Nathan Cochran, merchant recently displayed a bunch of sugar cane from one planted stalk, having thirty-six stalks, averaging seven feet each in height, and matured."

The telegraph and freight agent spoken of above was Mr. A. G. Smith, who came here in the fall of 1886 as freight and express agent and telegraph operator.

The water mill spoken of was about two miles south of the present townsite, on the creek near the Scott grove. It was operated by Mr. Will Bostick.

Nathan Cochran spoken of above, was the father of the first merchant in Wauchula. Mr. J. N. Cochran, son of Nathan A. Cochran, came here to sell goods for his father in the spring of 1886. The senior Mr. Cochran was then postmaster at Medulla, near Lakeland. The goods were kept in a small shack located about where Palmetto street and Fifth avenue intersect. The elder Mr. Cochran joined his son here in the fall of 1886.

The first church established in this section was located at Fort Hartsuff, southwest of the present townsite. It was a log structure and was used by both Baptists and Methodists. Rev. Sam Carson, on the Methodist circuit, was the first pastor. Rev. Sellers was the senior pastor. Rev. T. J. Sparkman was the first Baptist preacher to occupy the pulpit in Wauchula.

from p. 66
Rev T. J. Sparkman, preacher,
teacher and educator, taught the first
school in Wauchula, along about 1884
or 1885. The building was of logs and
was west of the present townsite.

Wauchula's first postmaster was Mr.
U. O. McConnell, who kept the office in
a little building at the northeast cor-
ner of Main street and Fifth avenue,
or where the main road crossed the
railroad at that time.

The first hotel to be operated here
was the Bel-Air hotel, opened in 1891
by Mr. A. C. Clavel, and it was located
nearly opposite and a little northwest
of the depot.

In September, 1895, the first black-
smith shop in Wauchula was opened.
It was located at the corner of what
is now Main street and Sixth avenue,
where the Royal Theater now stands.
The shop was opened by E. C. Sten-
strom, who with R. C. Clarke, one-
time mayor organized the Wauchula
Telephone Company here on February
5, 1905.

Hundreds of people came to Wau-
chula between the years 1886 and 1906.
The new country was just then being
opened up, land was cheap and produc-
tive, opportunities were unlimited.

Among those who came here dur-
ing that decade are some of the most
substantial citizens of the county to-
day. They had a most active part in
building the community and county,
and their names brighten the pages of
Hardee county's history like glowing
candles on a dark night. They worked
hard, made little but saved some of
that, and were ever ready to put forth
their best efforts toward building a
better town and community. They
were energetic, progressive, likeable.
It is chiefly through the efforts of
these early pioneers and the accom-

HISTORY OF HARDEE COUNTY

67

an extent the country they helped
build.

Early in March, 1901 Wauchula's
first newspaper was established, the
first issue being printed March 15,
1901. This paper was The Florida Ad-
vocate, with George M. Goolsby as
editor and publisher. For twenty-four
years Mr. Goolsby was on the job day
and night for Wauchula and this sec-
tion. A constant booster, energetic,
resourceful, original, unique, he left
a record in Hardee county's history
that time can only make brighter.
Until his death in May, 1925, George
M. Goolsby was continually on the fir-
ing line, working for what he believed
to be the best interests of Wauchula
and this community and section.

Never was a movement started that
was just and worthy but what he
threw his whole efforts into it and
helped put it across. Always on the
alert for anything that would benefit
the community, he was none the less
constantly on guard against what was
hurtful, degrading.

His death was cause for universal
sorrow in the community and through-
out South Florida, and so great was
his influence that it was suggested the
county be named after him, but he
modestly declined that honor and sug-
gested that it be called something else.

The newspaper which he founded has
become an institution, mainly through
his efforts and those of his wife, who
has managed the business since his
death.

The following notice of incorpora-
tion was printed in the fall of 1902:

NOTICE OF INCORPORATION

By authority vested in a committee

file: Sparkman

THE WOMAN WHO GOT LEFT.

J. H. Tharp.

Jesus was speaking on this occasion of His return to earth, and the events which are to accompany His second coming. When he returns, the redeemed who are on earth are to be caught up with Him in the air, and the rebellious are to be left below. Then there is to occur a period of tribulation, before Christ and the saints occupy the earth, in which great destruction and anguish is to be visited upon mankind, until two-thirds of the remaining population is to perish. (See Zachariah 13:8, 9; Isaiah 26:20, 21; Revelations 16:17-21, and Matthew 24:22)

The two women of our text are to be participants in that event. The scene is laid in Palestine, where today, as then, the hand mill is used. A model of that mill, exhibited in this country, shows it to be a very crude affair of stone placed on the floor, and a woman on two sides of it, sitting opposite each other, turning the mill, that they might obtain enough flour for one meal. While they are at this work the Lord is to return, and one of the women will be taken up with the host of redeemed to meet the Lord in the air, while one is to be left at the mill sitting in consternation, destined to be with the ones who are to be banished forever from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His kingdom.

Why this difference? Within the answer of that query lies some important lessons. May we reverently look into the teachings of this verse, and seek to find and follow the answer, of the Holy Spirit, of whom it is promised that He will lead us into all truth (John 16:13).

Yet us first treat it negatively. We are here taught that salvation is not in appearance. Both of the women likely resembled; in face and form there was not much difference. They may have



T. J. SPARKMAN, Lakeland,
Pastor at Wauchula.

women were dutiful housekeepers, and yet in each case one was a sinner, doomed to eternal death, while the other was a saint, destined for everlasting life. We see it the same today. Of

It was the state of the heart towards God.

One resembling the other outwardly, engaged in the same vocation, possessed of the same amount of this world's goods, in the same social circle, was lost, while the other was saved. Why? Because one had yielded up her affections to God, had centered her heart upon Heaven, while the other had stiffened her neck and hardened her heart against the Lord. Both acted alike, so far as we could see, toward mankind, but evidently not so toward God.

From this we learn that whether or not the individual is saved depends upon how his heart is, Godward. We cannot look into the face, nor listen to the words from the lips, and tell the state and fate of men. Only God knows, and the day of Christ's coming will reveal.

To put the answer, as to what determines the difference in the fate of the people, in language of today, we would say, Christ has been received in the heart of one, and not in the other. Christianity is the answer in one word. The one who is a Christian will be caught up with the angels and saints to meet the Lord in the air, the one who is not will be left and lost.

There are some teachings here, also, as to works. It conveys the idea that we are acceptable to God when we are engaged in the necessary duties of life. The two men spoken of in the verse previous to the text, were farmers, perhaps poor and obscure, yet one was received up into glory, which proves God was pleased with his work. The two women were poor and unknown to the world, living in a rural district, yet one was transferred from hard grinding to heavenly glory, proving that her work was approved of God. The obscure christian should take courage from this lesson. We believe many a mother spending her life in the back woods, never mixing with the moving mass of mankind, perhaps ignor-

The Florida Anthropologist

Vol. IX

March, 1956

No. 1

CONTENTS

located in
Seminole Indians
file

R. H. PRATT'S REPORT ON THE SEMINOLE IN 1879

Presented and Annotated by	William C. Sturtevant	1
INTRODUCTION	William C. Sturtevant	1
RICHARD HENRY PRATT	William C. Sturtevant	2
PRATT'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR HIS FLORIDA TRIP	E. J. Brooks	3
PRATT'S ORIGINAL REPORT	R. H. Pratt	5
ENCLOSURE, SEMINOLE STARCH MAKING	T. J. Sparkman	16
ENCLOSURE, FIRST SEMINOLE SCHOOLBOY	F. A. Hendry	17
NOTES	William C. Sturtevant	18
PREPARATION OF RUBBER BY THE FLORIDA SEMINOLE	Wilfred T. Neill	25
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE		29

Punta Gorda First Baptist voted in January 1975 to undertake a \$1 million three-phase building program. First was an addition to the Crosland Chapel. The educational building expansion was completed in January 1976. Phase three consisted of walks, paving, drainage and landscaping.

During this busy period, the church sponsored the South Punta Gorda Baptist Mission. Rev. Jack Edgeman was the first pastor there. The Mission became Trinity Baptist Church.

Punta Gorda First Baptist has 700 members guided by the Rev. Charles Mack Hutson --- and is still growing.

Today, the first sanctuary awaits a new mission. The spire roof was taken off in the early 30s (prior to 1935) when the wood shingles needed replacing and no one could be found to undertake the dangerous job.

The belfrey was removed by the Rebekahs in the late 60s (after 1962) when the flat cap replacing the spire began to leak. The bell was given to the Palm Dale Methodist church in Glades County.

Nevertheless, the tower and original, main structure are still sturdy --- ready for another century of service to the city.

PASTORAL ROSTER

Records of early pastors prior to 1924 are missing, but those remembered by long-time parishioners or discovered in early issues of the "Herald" are as follow:

Rev. Thomas J. Sparkman --- 1889, 1893

Rev. M.S. Stevens --- 1895-6

Rev. Dr. Martin A. Wood --- 1910

Rev. Thomas R. Woodson

Rev. Sanders

Rev. R.A. Sublette--- 1919

Rev. W.R. Poindexter--- 1919

Rev. Harry Grady Kenney --- 1919

Rev. Swain

Rev. E.L. Andrews

Rev. Dr. A.J. Holt --- 1924-26

Rev. Dr. James S. Day, Jr.

Oak Grove Wauchula

PASTORS

Jeremiah M. Hayman	1895 Organizer	Jim N. Rainey	1927
W. D. (Buddy) Payne	1895-96, 1899, 1903	Henry W. Smith	1929
A. Theodore Farabee	1897-98, 1907-08	J. Newell Hendry	1930-42
<u>T. J. Sparkman</u>	1900	Alton Roberts	1943-44
T. W. White	1901, 1911	George W. Dunn	1947-49
R. Y. Walden	1902	F. E. (Bill) Moffitt	1950
Eddie Todd	1903	Dwight C. Spillman	1951-54
J. W. Hendry	1904	W. B. Johnson	1955-57
E. C. (Ezra) Bostick	1905-06	Clyde Burke (interim)	1958
J. A. Atkins	1909-10	George E. Crowell	1959-68
H. C. Harris	1912	L. T. Fagan, Sr.	1969-70
Steve W. McClelland	1913-20, 1924	Cooper Marshall	1971-78
Sydney L. Albritton	1921-22, 1945-46	Perry Tomlinson (interim)	1978
R. Cannie Alderman	1925-26	Jimmy R. Williams, Sr.	1979-present

DEACONS - 1995

Wendell Cole	Jim Rogers
Wade Oden	Duck Smith
Pat Rhyan	Grover Terrell
Milton Roberts (Chairman)	Wayne Trotter

Dick Williams (Life Member - Inactive)



NOTE: Minutes of Oak Grove Baptist Church from 1895 up to 1930 were destroyed by fire. We are thankful that through the years church historians have been able to put together the history from memories of Mrs. Elvie Williams, Aunt Vi Norris, and a consultation with the Florida Baptist Historical Society. The Historic Annuals reflect data from the church dating back to November 12, 1895.

It has been concluded that Rev. Jeremiah M. Hayman was instrumental in leading and establishing Oak Grove as a constituted Baptist church and leading

the people to call a Pastor.

In November of 1895, Oak Grove Missionary Baptist was received into the Manatee Baptist Association. In 1897, the Association was divided and the new Association was named Peace River Baptist Association. Around 1963, by request of the Southern Baptist Convention, the word "Missionary" was removed from the name, thereby establishing the name, "Oak Grove Baptist Church", and is now a member of the Orange Blossom Baptist Association.

FORMER PASTORS



Rev. W. E. Schultz



Rev. Otis Garland



Rev. M. Felts Dent



Rev. Charles F. Granger

1876-1884.....	Rev. J. W. Hendry
1884-1893.....	Rev. T. J. Sparkman
1893-1897.....	Rev. E. J. Hull
1897-1898.....	Rev. W. D. Payne
1898-1899.....	Rev. T. J. Sparkman
1899-1900.....	Rev. M. S. Stevens
1900-1901.....	Rev. J. W. Hendry
1901-1903.....	Rev. E. L. Todd
1903-1906.....	Rev. R. Y. Walden
1906-1907.....	Rev. L. B. Boney
1907-1909.....	Rev. T. J. Sparkman
1909-1911.....	Rev. R. L. Brandenburg
1911-1914.....	Rev. J. R. Wells
1914-1919.....	Rev. R. P. McPherson
1919-1922.....	Rev. W. T. Dart
1922-1928.....	Rev. R. J. Mincey
1928-1932.....	Dr. J. F. Savell
1932-1935.....	Rev. B. A. Roth
1935-1938.....	Rev. E. A. Rice
1938-1943.....	Rev. Otis Garland
1943-1947.....	Rev. M. J. Schultz
1947-1962.....	Rev. Otis Garland
1962-1969.....	Rev. M. Felts Dent
1969-1975.....	Rev. Rev. Charles F. Granger
1976-1984.....	Rev. Herschel Creasman
1984-1994.....	Rev. Cornelius Davis
1994-1999.....	Rev. Mark Douglas



Rev. Herschel Creasman



Rev. Cornelius Davis



Rev. Mark Douglas

FBC, Sarasota



PASTORS

1902 - 1967

P. O. Miller	1902-1905
H. H. Norris	1905-1908
D. R. MacGregor	1908
J. H. Tharp	1909
E. J. Barber	1910
T. I. Sparkman	1911
H. A. Goering	1912
C. H. Ferrell	1913
S. G. Mullins	1914
J. R. Henry	1914-1918
A. J. Beck	1919-1925
J. S. McLemore	1925-1926
Stewart Long	1927-1928
J. P. Currin	1929-1930
T. O. Reese	1931-1934
Andrew Caraker	1934-1939
Claude Ammerman	1940-1942
H. C. Wayman	1943-1949
W. R. Hamilton	1949-1965
Emmett C. Johnson, Jr.	1965

Sixty-five years ago our Baptist predecessors brought into being a new church in the beautiful city of Sarasota . . . A church conceived by the spirit of God and established for the purpose of leading men to accept Christ as Saviour and to grow in His likeness for a lifetime.

And now in 1967, we find ourselves continuing in this precise ministry in a much larger Sarasota, which possesses a more complicated society with people from all walks of life, all points of view, and from all continents of the world. As we worship our Lord on this nineteenth day of March 1967, we pause to give praise and thanksgiving to God for His guidance through these years and to pay tribute to those who sacrificed and served that we might continue toward even "greater works" for our Lord.

Those living with God and those here with us who have worked for Christ and given of themselves and their means have demonstrated in rugged realism the impact of togetherness in the cause of Christ. Therefore, it behooves us to rededicate ourselves to the task which was theirs and the task which continues to be our . . . that we, as members of our beloved First Baptist Church so live, so preach, so teach, so give, so serve, and so build that those in future years can accomplish even "greater things" for our Lord through our Church.

Emmett C. Johnson