

THE OKLAHOMA BAPTIST CHRONICLE

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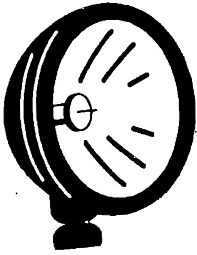
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Spotlight

FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE AT ONE CHURCH

This is the story of Bro. Charles Caughern, a pastor who served in one church for more than 50 years. While that is most probably not a record in Oklahoma, it is no doubt close to it. Many have served more than 50 years, but it is indeed the exception if that man stays in the same pulpit during that entire ministry. He will celebrate his 51st year as pastor in June 2016, and is looking forward to the church's 100th anniversary in 2017 at Summerfield Baptist Church, in LeFlore Association.

His parents never owned an automobile. He was the youngest of nine children. He grew up when an education was hard to get for many families in southeastern Oklahoma. When Charles was nine years old his father passed away. It was also that year that God became his new Father through Jesus Christ. He was at Kiamichi Baptist Assembly and Bill Blalock was the camp preacher when this young man went forward and accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. He grew up in Hodgen, Oklahoma, not too far from where he now pastors.

When Charles was 19 he married Delephine "Del" who was 16, and the love of his earthly life. He had worked in logging in the woods, and for a while with the railroad, until he surrendered to God's call to the ministry. Bro. Caughern got a good education from Carl Albert Jr. College (formerly Poteau Community College) in Poteau, and then graduated from South Eastern State, in Durant. Both he and his wife earned education degrees and served in various schools. He coached baseball and basketball, and served as superintendent for three school systems. Meanwhile, as the Lord led him, he served bi-vocationally as pastor at Fanshawe, Petros, and Liberty Hill. He and his wife (who passed away in

2008), have three sons who have all graduated from college, and one has his doctorate.

His education with the Lord for over 50 years in one church has given him wisdom and insight that is worth sharing with others. Charles was ordained February 24, 1963 by the Hodgen Church where he had been a member. He started his pastorate at Summerfield on June 1, 1965. The following are some thoughts on his ministry at Summerfield Baptist:

"You don't get to know people if you don't stay in the church. I am still learning about folks after 50 years. If you only stay a year or so at a church, the next man has to come in and start all over. I have seen a lot of young pastors who do not personally progress, but leave and start over. Neither the people or the young pastor gain much that way. At Summerfield Baptist we became lovers of the Bible. God always puts a lot of good people in our churches. Because of my 50 years, I have done a lot of funerals for people in other churches around here. Many of their families knew me better than their own pastor, and some churches were without a pastor at the time of need. If you just stay a few years you miss out on so much. Four generations in the same church has given me an opportunity to be part of the families.

I have many great memories. We have had eight to ten baptisms at a time, but I would not consider that great numbers. I do remember many families and people who accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. We just lived and loved each other. I pushed hard for our members and neighbors to love one another.

I worked with a man for 15 years who was hard against the church. But I kept working with him and he accepted the Lord and became one of the strongest workers and faithful supporters in the church. There was a young Native American mother called Wahtema. She and her husband had six children. She began attending with her children and they all became saved. Her husband saw the difference in his family and he also accepted Christ. He was really a faithful man. There were many others, but these just came to mind.

When we built our current building, the church didn't want to have a debt, so we built as we went and never did borrow money. When problems come you have to stay with God's Word. When you stay in the Word and pray about things, the Lord will get it done. That is a part of the advice I give to our people and to younger pastors.

I am concerned about some younger pastors. I have seen a lot of young pastors get in a church and stay just a little while. To follow

Spotlight

the Lord they must first be called to pastor. If you are doing God's will, doors will open and close, but don't use the church as a stepping stone to some other place. If you leave, leave for the right reason. I do not know how long the Lord will use me here, but as long as He desires, I will be submissive to Him."

Charles' health continues to be good and his outlook on life is bright. This thing called retirement is not something he will embrace unless the Lord tells him it is time. There have been many men who served faithfully for lesser years than Bro. Charles Caughern, but few can say they have served as pastor in the same church for more than 50 years.



Charles Caughern

A VISIT TO ROCK CREEK CHURCH AND THE CHOCTAW-CHICKASAW ASSOCIATION

This Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle will take time to revisit two older entities of our Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. The first focus will be on the Rock Creek area; specifically what is now called South Rock Creek Baptist Church. This church claims its history began back in 1851, and celebrated its 165th anniversary January 3, 2016. The executive-director of the convention, Dr. Anthony Jordan, attended that celebration. The next focal point will be on the Choctaw-Chickasaw Baptist Association, which Rock Creek helped organize back in 1872. While Rock Creek is not the first Choctaw Church and the Choctaw-Chickasaw Association was not the first association in the Indian Territory, they both have histories of rich and faithful service that deserve to be looked at again.

The Editor

HISTORY OF ROCK CREEK CHURCH LATIMER COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Tali Bok Baptist Church, which is the Choctaw name for “Red Rock”, was founded in 1851 or perhaps before that time. Dr. Joseph Samuel Murrow, who was a missionary to the Choctaw Nation for more than 60 years, told of the earlier years of the church. Murrow began his service in Indian Territory in 1857 as a missionary to the Creek Nation, and expanded his work to include Chickasaw, Seminole, and other tribes. Dr. Murrow stated that The Rock Creek (Tali Bok) Church was founded by the Choctaw missionary Peter Folsom along with a fellow laborer Joseph Smedley, a white missionary.

Peter Folsom’s Christian life began as a student in an Indian school near Georgetown, Kentucky, which was called Choctaw Academy. About 1828, seventeen children from this school were baptized into Great Crossings Church, and among them was Peter Folsom.

Folsom’s grave marker at New Hope Baptist Church, approximately three miles southwest of Keota, Oklahoma reads as follows:

REV. PETER FOLSOM, FIRST CHOCTAW BAPTIST/1814-1885

Born in Mississippi c. 1814. Converted at Choctaw Academy, Scott County, Kentucky c. 1829. With Rev. Joseph Smedley, he organized five churches in Indian Territory, including Rock Creek, Boiling Spring, and probably Cedar, in present Latimer County. Died Sept. 15, 1885. J. S. Murrow wrote, “He was a close student of God’s Word. Sound in faith and doctrine. His character is un-impeachable. Very eloquent. He preached more sermons, baptized more converts,

aided in organizing and ordaining more churches and preachers than any minister in the (Choctaw) Nation, leading more Choctaws from darkness to light than anyone of all denominations. The nation, the church and the world have lost few better and more useful men than Peter Folsom.”

Erected by the Choctaw-Chickasaw and Chi-Ka-Sha Associations, 1970. Same year the marble monument was moved from the family cemetery about 700 yards SSE.

About 1830 the Choctaw began their migration west to the Indian Territory. This area was assigned by the United States government in the long period called the Indian Removal (1820-42). Folsom was an outstanding leader among his people, and became chief of the Mushulatubbe District of the Choctaw Nation. He influenced Joseph Smedley to join him as a missionary from 1830-1840. These two constituted five or more churches, with Rock Creek being one of the earliest. These two men also ordained at least five native preachers including Lewis Cass, William Cass, Shonubbi, Alexander Pope, and Simon Hancock. Hancock is the only one not mentioned as having pastored at Rock Creek. Lewis Cass, baptized March 29, 1851, was apparently the first person baptized at Rock Creek and the first baptized Choctaw to become a preacher. Shonubbi, on August 12, 1851, and Alexander Pope baptized on May 1853, are noted to have been the next persons to be baptized. In 1852 there were four baptized, and in 1853 thirty-five more received water baptism into the church. Dr. Herbert M. Pierce (1904-1982), a long time missionary to China and noted Baptist historian, was able to secure the church roll for Rock Creek dated 1851. With this and later materials he gathered, the date of the church beginning in 1851 (or earlier) and the subsequent baptisms is historically confirmed.

J. S. Murrow while preaching Folsom's funeral in 1885 said, "With a face full of smiles and his heart full of exquisite joy, he throw off his armor and retired from the field to be rewarded with that crown sparkling with many stones." There is no doubt this man of God had a tremendous influence on Rock Creek Church and his people. He has been called "the first Choctaw Baptist", and his contemporaries had only generous praise for him.

The work among the Choctaw, up to the breaking out of the Civil War, showed times of advancing and decline. While Rock Creek seemed to be fairly strong, the lack of well-equipped leaders in some Choctaw Nation churches hindered them from growing as steadily and rapidly as others,

such as the Cherokees. Still, there was a continued growth among the churches up until the war. The war was described by historians as a blighting, withering, scorching breath that dried up the very fountains of progress in both the civil and spiritual life.

Owing to the war, almost all churches were closed. One unique situation for the Native Americans in the Indian Territory of that time was that while the United States government had repeatedly failed to honor previous treaties, the Native Americans always honored their agreements. In the signing of the treaties, especially during the 1820-40s, the Native Americans were required to fight for the United States if ever need be. It is estimated over ninety percent of able bodied male Native Americans joined in fighting in the Civil War. Because the Indian Territory was in the southern area, a difficult decision had to be made. Some Native Americans felt that since the treaties were signed with the United States then they must join the Union Army. Others stated that since the Southern states had seceded and formed the Confederacy, the Indian Territory had to honor those treaties through the new government of the South where the tribes were located. This took a very devastating toll on the tribes. Several tribes were divided within themselves and this caused extended grief and difficult reconciliation after the war.

The Rock Creek Church history is a part of this silent war time period. Dr. J. S. Murrow recorded the only note from history relating to this era and church was that a pastor of Rock Creek, William Cass, age 46, was killed in the Civil War during a daring charge against the Northern troops. Dr. Murrow recalled the pastor William Cass by stating, "He was a brainy man and wielded a large excellent influence. In the council of his nation, no man exerted a stronger and better influence among the full bloods." Brother Cass was also the first pastor of Boiling Springs Church in the same area. The next pastor noted in current extant articles was Logan Charity in 1887. By that time, the church that had been located north of Red Oak had burned down.

The church has shown willingness over the years to move several times within their general location to accommodate members and help in growth. The original church burned down apparently during or shortly after the Civil War. The original log structure was replaced by a 24 X 36 foot box shaped house. Church minutes of 1894 show that the church was still located north of Red Oak. In the late 1890s or early 1900s they moved three miles south and a few miles west of Red Oak, close to what was then called Austin Lake.

In January 1917 the church purchased eleven acres from Corwin Hornidy for a total of \$75.00. One acre was set aside for a cemetery. The first burial on record was Ben Setters who died in 1919. One account, which no doubt has a typographic error, states he was buried in 1909, which would have been eight years before the cemetery land was purchased. In the late 1920s the church moved again a few feet southeast. A well is still located at the place where the church building was moved during that period.

At some time during this era, camp houses were built to accommodate members and visitors to the area. Church gatherings often lasted three days (from Friday through Sunday) and several Oklahoma Native American Baptist churches built these houses. In some cases the members of these churches have purchased, built, or leased a particular camp house and still use it as a retreat for family gatherings. At Rock Creek during this earlier time there were approximately three families who decided to simply live on the grounds. In the late 1950s the church moved again to be close to the road. Then around 1958 the church purchased an old school house from the Lodi area north of Red Oak and connected it to the west side of the church. In the 1970s, Pastor Reuben Kemp led in the construction of a new place of worship located where a tabernacle (probably brush arbor) had been built in 1930. By the early 1980s this new church was ready for use. Much of their help in construction came from Ed Hutcherson and his youth group from the First Baptist Church, Winnsboro, Texas, and a church neighbor Luther Holly. Holly volunteered his labor and provided the equipment needed for the construction. The church pews were from Highbridge Baptist Church, and the pulpit was built by Jim Corbett, who was one of the Winnsboro group. Due to the newer location, the term "South Rock Creek" was being applied to the church. The name was officially adopted and the church has remained at the new location since that time.

Being mission minded the church, not long after finishing their own facility, was led by the Holy Spirit to step out in faith and plant a new mission work. On January 16, 1982, the church covenanted to sponsor a mission at Broken Bow, Oklahoma. On January 11, 1983, the mission was started in a rental property with 24 present. For their work, and with the aid of a multi-state mission effort, Rock Creek in 1983 received an "Evangelism Pacesetter Award" from the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma for the mission's 35 baptisms. There were churches from five states that helped with this project. The Thessalonian Baptist, Oklahoma, youth camped out with Rock Creek teenagers and went door to door with personal invitations. First, Morris, Oklahoma, gave a church bus. Pews,

tables, and chairs came from First, Alma, Arkansas. First, Winnsboro, Texas assisted with monthly payments until the debt was paid in full. Other churches who aided the mission were Clear Creek, Boiling Springs, Brushy, Concord, Friendship, Durwood, Greenhill, New Hope, Pine Grove, Sandy Creek, Sixth Street and Thessalonian, all of Oklahoma. Other aid came from Frisco Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, Princeton Baptist Church of West Virginia, and dozens of people including major support from Kenneth and Alicia Mullins. Few mission starts can attribute Baptist groups from four states and over a dozen churches as being part of the parent family like this new born mission. The mission of South Creek eventually became Myrtlewood Baptist Church. Historian Herbert Pierce stated in his research in the mid-1950s that the pastors of Rock Creek produced a legacy of great men. These included: Logan Charity, Lewis Cass, Shonnubbi, Alexander Pope, William Cass, Caldwell Coley, Culberson Thompson, I. S. Wright, Thomas Adam, Sim Thompson, Morris Sam, Edward Burnett, Israel Burnett, Joshua Wesley, Mose Wesley, Isaiah Wesley, B. B. Ott, Robert Green, Edward Coley, Elum Wolfe, Wallace Wolfe, Nathan Benton, Everett Bacon, Howard Wade, Isom Pickens, Logan Harlin, Abel Brown, Newt Wallace, Noy Bart Bonaparte, H. D. Alexander, Johnny Baker, Sr., Tom Battiest, Coolidge Coley, Leslie Pope, Lee Carshall, Emmitt Jim, Reuben Kemp, and Joe Jim. Some names may have been omitted by Dr. Pierce owing to lack of information.

South Rock Creek Church is not only still very active, its name change has helped clarify its identity. A later church, not a part of the original Rock Creek of 1851, or of the South Rock Creek, was established north of Red Oak and took the name of North Rock Creek. Both churches have served in harmony and been a blessing to the Lord.

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CHOCTAW-CHICKASAW ASSOCIATION

The Choctaw-Chickasaw Association was not the first Baptist association in the Indian Territory, but it was an important one. The first currently known association related to Indian Territory was actually formed in Cincinnati, Ohio, on October 27, 1842, and had its primary mission building in Louisville, Kentucky. It is considered by some as the first association in Indian Territory owing to the mission efforts of those days. Isaac McCoy, after establishing the first church in Indian Territory on September 9, 1832, returned to the Cincinnati area and founded what was called the American Indian Mission Association. He was also named the first corresponding secretary. His goal was for "the promotion of the spiritual and temporal interests of the Aborigines." The association sent several missionaries to the Indian Territory. It was under these missionaries' leadership that the "General Association of United Baptists in the Southern Part of Indian Territory" was formed on October 18, 1848. The first three day meeting (October 17-19, 1848) was at Armstrong Academy in Pushmataha District, Indian Territory. The location is described as having been about three and one-half miles northeast of present day Bokchito in Bryan County.

The second association in the territory was the Creek Association, first organized at Old North Fork Town, Creek Nation, in September 1851. Very little is known regarding this association except that the only records available are from September 6, 1877. It is that later record that mentions the 1851 beginning date and also that the 1877 meeting was the fourth meeting since the Civil War.

The third association formed was the Ramsey Association in 1860. Owing to the approaching war, this five church group only had one meeting after its organization, which was in 1861 at Cedar Creek in Skullyville County.

The next group to form was the Cherokee Association in September 1860. It is important because it is the oldest Baptist association in Indian Territory with an unbroken history. While the Civil War disrupted its activities the association may have been the earliest to resume work after the war. It has maintained continuous service since 1869.

The focus of this article is on the fifth association of Native Americans in Oklahoma. This is the Choctaw-Chickasaw Association which has a history of outstanding service and is related to the sister article in this issue on Rock Creek Baptist Church. Joseph Samuel Murrow was appointed a missionary by the Domestic and Indian Mission Board, under support of the Rehoboth Association, Macon, Georgia. He arrived at Micco, Creek Nation, Indian Territory, near present day Eufaula, Oklahoma in November, 1857. During the Civil War, J. S. Murrow worked as a subsistence agent for the Confederate government and helped care for over 4,000 refugee Native Americans fleeing the war by journeying to the Red River and then into Texas. When he returned after the war he settled in what is now the Atoka area and organized the Rehoboth Baptist Church in 1869. The Rehoboth Church invited other area churches to join them in starting the Choctaw-Chickasaw Association on July 5, 1872.

Forty-six people from 16 churches along with other guests attended the formation. These included Native Americans, African Americans and white people. Articles of faith were adopted during the first session. Churches represented were Ephesus No. 1, Ephesus No. 2, Ebenezer, Brushy Creek (probably 15 miles south of Hartshorne), High Hill (Nunny-Cha-ha, located 10 miles east of McAlester), Sardis, Philadelphia, San Bois, Zion, Salem (African American), Bethel No. 1, Bethel No. 2 (African American), Stonewall, Rock Creek, Boiling Springs and the host church, Rehoboth, which later changed its name to Atoka meaning "Many Waters." The total membership of these churches was 717. The African American churches had the largest membership with Salem having 184 members and Bethel No. 2 with 85.

Native American pastors at this organizational meeting included Peter Folsom, Simon Hancock, James Williams, and Louis Cass. African American pastors included Samuel Brewer and Bankston Stephenson. The white missionaries present were J. S. Murrow, R. J. Hogue, and Willis Burns. Burns was elected moderator, O. C. Hall was selected as the English clerk, Jefferson Hancock accepted

the position of the Choctaw clerk, and Humphrey Colbert was elected as interpreter.

This association was extremely important to the early work and its influence was clearly seen throughout the area. The Choctaw-Chickasaw Association was the parent body for many other associations which later formed in Indian Territory and in the state of Oklahoma.

The association had an interesting beginning. During the first session in 1872, the record shows there was an ordination service, a profession of faith, a baptismal service, and the observance of the Lord's Supper. The clerk described the ordination in this fashion:

The time given for recess having expired, at the signal the congregation again assembled in the arbor. The ministering brethren present formed themselves into a Presbytery, and proceeded to set apart Bro. Benjamin Baker to the full office of the gospel ministry, by the imposition of hands, prayer, and other rites usually observed on such occasions, after due examination of the candidate, with respect to his Christian experience, his call to preach, his ability to teach, etc., all which were satisfactory to the Presbytery.

Part of this historic beginning was a report from a "Committee of Queries." This unusual committee apparently was charged with defining certain criteria the association members should consider observing that were not covered in a bylaw or constitution. These were matters that had arisen in the various churches and some felt they needed a general guideline on how to handle the situations while the association was being formed. As always, owing to the autonomy of the local churches, the committees' report was to be a helpful guide, but was not binding. It simply aided in a basic unity of thought to help the churches who felt they needed it. A few of the questions and answers are as follows:

Query 1. What duties belong to the deacon's office? Ans. The word deacon implies service; hence this office in the church calls for gospel work. And while the pastor is to feed and lead the flock, over which he has been appointed of God as an under shepherd, the deacon is to attend to the temporalities of both the pastor and the church, including the pastor's support, the incidental expenses of the church and the care of the poor, and assist in spiritual work as he may need, according to the ability given.

Query 2. Is it scriptural for a church to appoint a certain day in each month for fast days, and carry on female prayer meetings on these days? Ans. Such fast days and such meetings are not enjoined by command upon the churches by the teaching of Christ and the apostles, yet they are commended by the examples and various intimations given in scripture, and we see no objection to female prayer meetings, or other prayer meetings in connection with fast-day meetings.

Query 4. Is it scriptural to have deaconesses? If so, what are their duties? Ans. The scriptures do not teach it; consequently they have no duties.

Query 5. What time should be consumed in the delivery of a sermon? Ans. No positive length of time can be adopted. Circumstances must regulate the time. Proper

length as a general rule, should not weary patient hearers.

A guest preacher, Dr. G. J. Johnson of St. Louis, Mo. was granted the privilege of baptizing the new convert during the Monday, July 8, 1872 session. This was done with the approval of the association and the pastor of High Hill Church. The clerk noted that, "Immediately after adjournment the congregation repaired to the water, where Dr. Johnson made a brief appropriate address, and then proceeded by invitation of the pastor, to administer the ordinance of baptism to the brother who was received Sabbath night."

Dr. J. M. Gaskin, former Historical Secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, once expressed his thought that it was not uncommon for meetings such as this, rather than just a local church, to commonly observe the Lord's Supper. These events were to be times of spiritual quietude and fellowship.

It was also unique that the brethren consisted of Native Americans, African Americans, and white Americans. The Choctaw-Chickasaw Association thus continued, as was in the very first church founded by Isaac McCoy in Indian Territory, the biblically sound practice of the inclusion of all Christians in the fellowship of the church, no matter rich or poor, formal or experiential educational, or the ethnic origin of any man. Oklahoma is thus the only state to have established both their first Baptist church and first association with multi-ethnic memberships.

This is also the association that presented the nation with the first organized women's missionary group. It was on August 12, during the 1876 Choctaw-Chickasaw Association meeting at Nunny-Cha-ha (High Hill), that the first Women's Missionary Union was formed among Baptists in America.

The story begins in May 1876 when J. S. Murrow visited the Northern Baptist's anniversary session at Buffalo, New York. While there he decided to attend a women's meeting to hear some foreign missionaries. It was the first time in his life he had heard a woman speak in public. His presence in the meeting created a sense of interest in Indian missions. He secured a promise from Dr. C. R. Blackall and wife from Chicago to come to Indian Territory and tell of their experiences on the foreign fields.

The Blackall's came in August 1876, bringing with them D. T. Morrill of the American Baptist Publication Society in St. Louis, Bro. C. S. Sheffield of Kansas City, and W. G. Ingalls, District Secretary, American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York. The Choctaw-Chickasaw Association meetings began on Friday, August 11, 1876, at the Nunny-Cha-ha Church. While the association was only four years old it had demonstrated a heart for mission work among the Tribal Nations. Dr. J. S. Murrow had looked forward to this time, but he became extremely ill and was carried on a cot from the railroad station in order for him to attend. While he was too ill to sit up, he believed it was too important of any occasion to miss. Murrow's hope was for an interest to be expressed toward Native American work. The result of the meetings seemed to far surpass his expectations.

On a motion by Murrow the association voted to suspend regular service, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon conduct a "Woman's Mass Missionary Meeting" under the direction of Mrs. Blackall. Not only did the motion pass, but Mrs. Blackall felt led to schedule an additional meeting for the women on August 12, as the men met in their meeting.

This well known story tells of how she spoke to the women through an interpreter, Mrs. Czarina (Robb) Bond, of the important work of telling of Jesus to people who live in foreign lands. She explained the plans the American Baptist had for organizing and reaching those people. She told of how white sisters were sending women missionaries across the oceans to teach the heathen women about Christ the Savior.

While she was talking a full-blood Indian woman, Mrs. Sallie Holston, held up her hand. Mrs. Bond interpreted to Mrs. Blackall that the Indian sister had a question. Mrs. Blackall said, "Tell her to ask it." The Native American woman said, "If you are doing so much to help women across the big waters why do you not send Christian women to teach us in your own country? We want to know how to work for Jesus. We want to be taught how to bring up our children for Jesus. Why don't you send us women missionaries?" She sat down.

Mrs. Blackall was astonished and did not respond for a few moments. She then asked the interpreter to tell the younger lady that she had no answer. She did comment that work among the Indian women should have already begun. At the close of this meeting she

helped them form what they called the "Woman's Baptist Home Mission Society" in the United States. Mrs. Sallie Holston was named president and Mrs. Bond was elected secretary. Thus, with this humble beginning on August 12, 1876, the Choctaw-Chickasaw Association of Indian Territory established this work of great honor and service. Within one year, in February 1877, the national Woman's Baptist Home Mission Society was formed with its headquarters in a building in Chicago, Illinois. In 1878 the new national organization began work in Indian Territory by first sending Mrs. C. Swift to visit the area to observe and report to the women of Chicago and the north. Not too long after, the national society sent Mrs. Shaw, a widow, and she and Mrs. Bond traveled among the churches teaching the women how to conduct meetings and earn money for mission efforts. In 1882 Miss Laura Elder, a missionary, began a work among the Seminoles that lasted 15 years. In 1882 the national Woman's Baptist Home Mission Society of the northern Baptists also established a school in Chicago to train women missionaries. In August 1882, this society sent one of the trained workers, Miss K. L. Ellett, to the Cherokee women. She taught in the Native American school at Tahlequah, the Capital of the Cherokee Nation. The school was called Indian University at that time and is now known as Bacone University. This women's work all began because Sally Holston raised her hand in a meeting at Nunny-Cha-ha. It is interesting that the term "woman's" rather than "women's" has been applied to the title of the first group in Indian Territory and has been retained by both the Northern and Southern Baptist national organizations, even to the modern times.

The work being referenced in this article was all a part of the Baptists of the north and reflects those dates of establishment. While women began meeting apart from their husbands at the Southern Baptist Convention as early as 1868, this was more for social purposes since they were not allowed to attend the convention sessions. It was not until 1888 that the Baptist women of the south formed the Woman's Missionary Union, as an auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Many other important discussions came out of this association. At the organization meeting in 1872 there was much talk of establishing a Sunday School Convention. Apparently, however, the group was not ready to make such a decision. When E. H. Rishel was elected president of the association in 1893 he instituted a strong emphasis on Sunday school and subsequent reports from the churches.

As with any family, the Choctaw-Chickasaw Association did have a few times of trials and tribulations. When the association met in 1910 many of the leaders wanted to form a separate organization. The result was that on October 10, 1910 the Chi-ka-sha Association was formed with eight churches, and the Choctaw churches continued with the name of the Choctaw Baptist Association which still included several Chickasaw who did not go with the new group.

Other matters arose over the years. In 1924 a problem developed over the idea of creating a larger budget. The result was a faction withdrew and named themselves the Choctaw-Chickasaw Ministers Association. Then in 1932 Bro. G. Lee Phelps, a white missionary to the Native Americans, presented a plan calling for the consolidation of the original Choctaw and Chickasaw Association. With much discussion, Phelps saw the wisdom of withdrawing the plan at that time.

In spite of minor differences over the years, the associations were able to adjust and maintain their spiritual characters. The modern Choctaw-Chickasaw Association still retains a spirit of cooperation with the Chi-ka-sha Association and other Native American Baptist entities. It is interesting to compare the early churches of the original association with those who still remain in some form. Of the 15 churches still in the association, only Rock Creek (now South Rock Creek) is left of the original association members. Some churches from the 1872 membership have joined other associations over the years and still remain active today.

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NECROLOGY

January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015

Allen, Ramona P., 75, died August 21. She served with her husband, Dr. Delmer Allen, in pastorates, the Army and Prison Chaplaincy, and as overseas missionaries with the International Mission Board.

Baker, Kathy, 62, died February 9. Services were February 12 at Oklahoma City, Fortieth Street, where her husband Larry is pastor. For years, she had a Christian ministry through her Avon business.

Behnke, Wanda, 77, died August 22. The service was August 25 at Jackson Funeral Home in Frederick. She served with her husband Roland Behnke at churches in Oklahoma, Texas, Oregon and Colorado.

Bruce, Clarice, 91, died December 14. She was the mother of Bob Nigh, managing editor of *The Baptist Messenger*, and Larry Nigh, pastor of Ponca City, Northeast.

Burns, John W., 80, died February 1. Services were February 5 at Edmond, Oakdale. Ordained at Taloga, First, he pastored in Oklahoma and served in Baptist Collegiate Ministries at Central State College (now UCO) and Oklahoma City University and was a state BCM associate.

Callon, Roland, 93, died April 20. Funeral service was April 23 at Mark Griffith Memorial Funeral Home in Sand Springs. He served at Sharon, First and at several churches in the Tulsa area.

Casto, Ron, 73, grandfather of Dru Baker (BGCO Equipping Team), died November 29. Services were December 8 at Mustang, Chisholm Heights Baptist Church.

Chennault, Judy, 72, died June 6. The memorial service was June 10 in Broken Arrow. She was the wife of John who was a pastor from El Reno. She attended Oklahoma Baptist University on a music composition scholarship, directed numerous youth choirs, accompanied various instrumentalists, was a sponsor of youth groups, taught young women's Bible classes and became a women's conference leader.

Childers, Ivan, wife of M. H. Childers, former pastor and Beckham/Mills Baptist Association director of missions, died July 11. She

was the mother of Steve Childers (Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children).

Choate, Bill, 86, died October 17. He was a pastor of churches in Texas and Oklahoma for 55 years and a graduate of Southwestern Seminary.

Elliff, Jeannie, 69, died July 20 following a long struggle with cancer. The wife of former International Mission Board president Tom Elliff, they also served in Zimbabwe, and two of their children with their own families also served overseas as missionaries. She received the Willie Turner Dawson award at the Ministers' Wives Luncheon during the 2014 Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting.

Gonzales, Manuel "Speedy", father of Jodi Gonzales Bain (BGCO CP office consultant and former administrative assistant for the Equipping Team), died May 15. Services were May 20 at Resthaven Funeral Home in Oklahoma City.

Hall, Billy Roy, died October 15. Services were October 17 in Altus. He served as a Southern Baptist pastor in Oklahoma and Kansas for over 50 years.

Hall, Tom, 71, died December 12. Funeral services were December 16 at McCloud, Emmanuel. He was pastor of Shawnee, New Life and a member of Faithriders.

Harjo, Eugene, 91, died December 14. Services were December 22 at Williamson-Spradlin Funeral Home in Wetumka. A former pastor, he was a charter member of Oklahoma City, Central where he served as church treasurer for 45 years.

Haskins, Eulene, 78, died June 20. Services were at Oklahoma City, Quail Springs Baptist Church. She was the wife of Bob Haskins, retired senior associate executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. She taught private piano lessons for 32 years, taught Sunday School and was a gifted church pianist.

Hawkins, Dwight, 70 died June 24. Services were at Anadarko, Bethel. He was a pastor of several churches in Oklahoma.

Hayes, Kenneth E., 92, died December 29. Services were January 2 at Lawton, First West. He served as pastor of Lawton, Jefferson until 2012.

Heath, John L., 80, died April 7 in Denison, Texas. A memorial service was held at Durant, First, on May 2. He served as a Baptist Student Union/BCM director at Southeastern Oklahoma for 39 years.

Highfill, Rosemary Kemmerer, 100, died September 29 in Burleson, TX. She was the wife of longtime state pastor and former Frisco Association director of missions, Herman Highfill.

Jordan, Norma, 89, died February 22. Her services were held at Bartlesville, First on February 25. She is the mother of Anthony L. Jordan, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma executive director-treasurer. She was married to Aden Lee Roy Jordan, and they were employed by Douglas Aircraft in Tulsa during World War II. She was a church pianist in Skiatook for many years.

Kirkendall, James F., 91, died March 7. A graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University and Southwestern Seminary he served as pastor of churches in Indiana, Mississippi and Missouri before appointment as International Mission Board missionaries in 1962. They served in Beirut, Lebanon and on parts of the Arabian Peninsula. After 1979 he was pastor in Brussels, Belgium and then Tangier, Morocco.

Koonce, Guy, father of Paul Koonce (Washington-Osage Association Director of Missions). The services honoring his life were August 25 in Tuttle.

Loper, Dorothy, mother of Charlie Loper (BGCO Technical Support), died August 9 following a lengthy battle with cancer. The service honoring her life was held August 15 at Edmond, Highland Park Baptist Church.

Mackey, Frank J., Jr., 89, died February 24. Graveside service with military honors was March 3 at Williamette, Oregon, National Cemetery. A graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, he was a pastor/evangelist and served in the European Theater of Operations during World War II.

McCullough, Paul, 87, died May 17. Funeral services were May 22 at Bethany, Council Road. McCullough served as pastor of five Oklahoma churches prior to 1974 when he began work with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma serving as State Royal Ambassador director, and then as the director of Camp Hudgens for 19 years.

McLemore, Dan, 66, died April 12. Services were April 14 at Durant, Fairview. He pastored several churches in Oklahoma and was founder and pastor of the Native American Mission of Durant, Fairview.

Means, Kay, former BGCO Equipping Team employee, died December 3 after having meningitis and several strokes.

Morrison, Nita, former BGCO employee and mother of Beth Thornton (Union Baptist Association), died November 4. Services were at Moore, First Baptist Church, on November 7.

Morrison, Willis "Bill", 83, died December 30. Services were January 4, at McNeil's Funeral Service in Mustang. He is the father of Bart Morrison, former minister of music at Ada, First. Morrison served in law enforcement.

Palmer, T. Monroe, died and services were April 23, at Collinsville, First Baptist, where he was a longtime pastor.

Ramirez, Manuel, 91, died March 16. Graveside services were in Nashville, Tennessee March 20. A graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, he taught Spanish there before teaching at Ouachita Baptist University and Henderson State University for 30 years.

Reeves, Buddy, 80, died June 24. Services were July 2 at Chapel Hill Funeral Home. For 30 years he pastored in Oklahoma, Texas, and California. He served as an active duty chaplain in the U. S. Navy during the Vietnam War.

Rogers, Darvin, father/father-in-law of Darla and Corky Eshelman (Baptist Village Communities), died June 29. Services were at Phoenix, Arizona, Foothills Baptist Church July 6.

Savage, Ted, 87, died July 28. Services were at Livingston, Central. He served in several pastoral positions in Oklahoma as well as in Colorado and Texas. He served as a missionary to Zambia for 12 years.

Senter, Mark, retired pastor of Etowah Baptist in Noble, died June 30. Services were July 3 at Norman, Robinson Street Church.

Shelton, Tom, 75, died August 28. Funeral service was September 2 at Muskogee, First. Shelton served on pastoral care staff, as bi-vocational music and youth minister, pastor, and served Oldham Memorial for 24 years as pastor. He conducted over 150 revivals during his ministry.

Stanfield, David, died April 10. He was a longtime pastor in the McAlester area, including Krebs, First, and Hartshorne, First.

Swagerty, A. L., 81, died August 30. He was a former state pastor and director of missions for Caddo Baptist Association. Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Fletcher Funeral Home, Fletcher. Services were September 3 at First Baptist Church.

Swain, Ives, 92, the grandmother of James Swain (BGCO Equipping Team Leader) died December 6. Burial will be in Eldorado, Texas.

Taylor, Wayne, 62, died July 12. He served as pastor of six churches in Oklahoma. He is survived by his wife Genilee, two children and three grandsons.

Upchurch, Lois D., 94, died March 27, in Temple, Texas. Funeral services were held at First Baptist Church, Hugo on March 31 where she was a member. She married Forrest in 1942 in Durant.

She was active in Women's Missionary Union, a devoted pastor's wife, and together they served several churches.

Wagoner, Flora "Flo" Edith, 88, died December 26. She was most recently married to the late Norman Wagoner, former state disaster relief training director. She and Norman fulfilled a lifetime dream serving as missionaries in the Dakotas, Wyoming and Hawaii.

Walters, Burnadean, 81, died December 30. Funeral services were January 2 at Nicoma Park, First. She is the mother of Mark Walters, the pastor there.

Westbrook, Jolene, wife of Soper, First Baptist Church pastor Rick Westbrook, died November 4. She was the mother of six boys, active in her church and the Frisco Association and blessed with a beautiful voice.

White, Ronnie, 52, died June 19. Services were June 24 at Watts Funeral Home in Madill. White was pastor of Enos Baptist Church.

Wiginton, La Moyne, 82, died November 9. She was the wife of Travis Wiginton who was a longtime pastor, and they also served as International Mission Board missionaries in Korea.

Woodward, Betty, 83, died August 23. Memorial services were at Shawnee, First September 12. She served as associate professor of music at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) from 1966 –1994 and was the wife of James D. Woodward who served as OBU's dean of the Warren M. Angell College of Fine Arts 1973 – 1986. She was a nationally-recognized children's choir clinician.

Memorial Gifts

On September 8, 1998 by vote of the Historical Commission, a memorial fund was established whereby a gift of \$25 or more may be made to the Gaskin Historical Archives and Library Forever Fund in memory of a deceased relative or friend.

Ramona Allen, Wilburton;

Given by John and Pat Hart

Ramona Allen, Wilburton;

Given by Delmer, Charity and Tim Allen

James Ball, Claremore;

Given by Lemuel Ball

Margie Ball, Claremore;

Given by Lemuel Ball

Bob Burrows, Amarillo, Texas;

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Pluma Cantrell, Sallisaw;

Given by Del and Ramona Allen

Rose Chronister, Wilburton;

Given by Sans Bois Baptist Association

E. Farrell Dixon, Tulsa;

Given by Curtis and Betty Dixon

Donald R. Dunn, Chickasha;

Given by Jimmie L. Dunn

Betty Farris, , Muskogee;

Given by Del and Ramona Allen

Virginia Ann Fry, Claremore;
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Helen Isom Gaskin, Durant;
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Jim Glaze, Montgomery, Alabama;
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George Hill, Coalgate;
Given by Margaret Hill

George Hill, Coalgate;
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Mrs. Carrell Hooper, Durant;
Given by J. M. and Helen Gaskin

Carleen Jones, Oklahoma City;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Norma Jordan, Bartlesville;
Given by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Nadean Justice, Oklahoma City;
Given by J. M. Gaskin

Murray Leath, Plano, Texas;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Dick Lovelady, Bethany;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Memorials

Clara Luedecke, Weatherford, Texas;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Carl Mackey, Kingfisher;
Given by Jonell Crawford

Charles Mackey, Durant;
Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

Burl Mackey, Kingfisher;
Given by Jonell Crawford

Robert Mackey, Durant;
Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

Lee McWilliams, Durant;
Given by Patricia Roberts

Maye McWilliams, Durant;
Given by Patricia Roberts

John H. Morton, Durant;
Given by Bill J. Morton

Emma L. Shoemate Morton, Durant;
Given by Bill J. Morton

Wenonah Willene Pierce, Fayetteville, Arkansas;
Given by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Wenonah Willene Pierce, Fayetteville, Arkansas;
Given by Del and Ramona Allen

John D. Riggs, Durant;
Given by J. M. Gaskin

Todd Sheldon, Dallas, Texas;

Given by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Todd Sheldon, Dallas, Texas;

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

John L. Smith, Marlow;

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William G. Tanner, Belton, Texas;

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

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Given by Kathyryne Timberlake

Thelma Townsend, Oklahoma City;

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Lawrence Van Horn, Oklahoma City;

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

H. Alton Webb, Anadarko;

Given by J. M. and Helen Gaskin

Almeda Welch, Durant;

Given by J. M. and Helen Gaskin

Hazel Marie Williams White, Wilburton;

Given by Del and Ramona Allen