

THE OKLAHOMA BAPTIST CHRONICLE

Eli H. Sheldon, Editor
3800 North May
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
esheldon@bgco.org

Published by the
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
of the
Baptist General Convention of the
State of Oklahoma
and the
OKLAHOMA BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Baptist Building
3800 North May
Oklahoma City, OK 73112-6506

CONTENTS

Spotlight.....	5
----------------	---

2012 Historical Society Minutes.....	9
--------------------------------------	---

2012 Hall of Fame Monographs

Raymond Gary, by Martha Ray.....	15
Mordecai Fowler Ham, by Willene Pierce.....	19
Robert Scales, by Robert Haskins.....	23
Frank D. Sears, by Marlene Sears Newport.....	27

2012 Distinguished Service Award

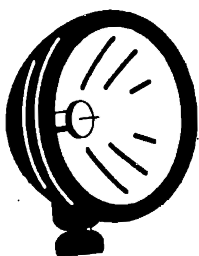
Benjamin Lacy.....	29
--------------------	----

2011 Church History Award

<i>“Backward Glance—Forward Vision”</i> by Donna Rich, Moore, Regency Park.....	31
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Uncle Jimmy and the BGCO Meeting in 1962.....	33
-----------------------------------------------	----

Memorials.....	37
----------------	----



Spotlight on

THE ARCHIVES



Decillion Steele and Freida Sheldon

DECILLION STEELE AND THE NORITAKE CHINA

One of the great blessings of being the historical secretary is to be there when different and interesting gifts are donated to the Gas-kin Baptist Archives. Freida and I were in such a place of blessing this past August 29th, when we visited the Edmond home of Mrs. Decillion Steele, a former employee of the BGCO. As I recorded our conversation for our oral history records, Freida packed the china for the journey to OBU. Decillion (pronounced Dee-cillion) would occasionally be asked, "How much is a decillion?" In this case, she is a Christian lady well beyond any earthly value.

The Lady Decillion

Mrs. Steele was born in 1921 and remembers the difficulties of the Great Depression. The family moved often during the late 1920's and early 1930's. They moved to wherever her father could find a job. Her mother had been ill and spent much time in hospitals, so her father and grandparents bore the major task of raising the children. Those difficult years helped Decillion in later times to understand the value of an honest job and good work ethics.

She married her husband Milburn in January 1941 and their first son was born in October of that year. A second son was born in 1943. Milburn was working at Tinker Air Force Base in 1943 when an officer asked for men to volunteer to go to England to aid in the war effort. Milburn left within a month and was gone three years (until 1946). Her husband was required to stay beyond the end of the war to man an office in occupied Germany. While gone he was unable to save any money and on his return the family faced financial difficulties.

In 1949 Milburn was back at Tinker, but working for less than previously. Decillion decided she would have to go to work to help the family.

Not all was dim for them. They had been paying rent for an apartment for some time when the owner discovered the one collecting the rent had been overcharging them. The owner gave them one year free rent for the next year. This helped greatly with providing for a family with two little children.

Decillion began going from store to store and when she left the Brown Department Store in downtown Oklahoma City she noticed a sign on the Baptist Building across the street. She applied for a job there and met Miss Mable Morrison who was the head bookkeeper and office manager. Decillion had graduated from high school at age 16 and attended a one year business college. She knew the principal of the college and he had awarded her the one year scholarship. This was just what the Baptist Building needed. Mrs. Steele could type, take shorthand, and do dictation. Decillion worked from 1949 to 1959 and enjoyed the experience.

She had the opportunity of beginning her employment in the old Baptist Building at 223 ½ Northwest First Street (now Park Avenue) in Oklahoma City, and finishing her tasks in the newer building at Northwest 11th and Robinson. In 1959 she left the Baptist Building to work at Tinker where her husband was still employed. She often recalls how much she missed her work for Baptists.

While she was hired by “Miss Mabel” and served in the accounting department, her job expanded to aid Dr. Potter, Corresponding Secretary (now called the Executive Director-Treasurer) of the convention. Potter was the director from 1933-1951, and for a time was the director of both the convention and the Baptist Foundation. In 1949 Auguie Henry arrived from First, McAlester, to assume the directorship of the foundation.

While Dr. Potter was director of the convention his secretary was Lucille Driggers. When Driggers found out about Decillion’s skills, especially in dictation, Mrs. Steele was often called upon to aid Potter’s office. For ten wonderful years she worked with people who loved the Lord and what they did. Since Decillion posted most the offering receipts, she became familiar with many of the pastors of the Oklahoma Baptist churches.

Her description of her former co-workers is always positive and complimentary. Her office, because of its location, was especially close to the work of the Brotherhood and Sunday School Departments.

T. P. Haskins was the director of the Brotherhood at that time. Decillion describes him as a really strong Christian gentleman. He was a handsome man and extremely kind to everyone. She also fondly remembers Dr. T. B. Lackey who worked closely with the Sunday School Department. Dr. Lackey was the assistant executive-secretary in those days, and was elected to that position in August 1946.

One thing she clearly remembers is every morning they arrived at 8:00 a.m. and all the building gathered for a devotion and prayer time. About 8:15 they returned to their work places. The executives and department heads took turns leading the devotions, and she describes them all as wonderful gentlemen.

The Noritake China

Decillion's announcement that she was leaving the Baptist Building after ten years to join the work at Tinker was received with both joy and sorrow. They were sad she was leaving, but grateful for her faithful years of service. She is not sure who instigated the gift of the Noritake China, but she believes Miss Mabel was somehow behind the matter. Several employees were there for the presentation of the gift, including Dr. Lackey who was now the executive treasurer-director of the convention. It was a beautiful farewell and a great thought on the part of the convention to honor her in such a manner. The beautiful complete set of six piece place settings of china was given out of love and received in humbleness.

Noritake China was first produced in 1876 and has experienced several "marking" changes over the years. The beautiful pink flower with leaves design of the Steele gift bears the "Rose China" designation prevalent between 1946 and 1952. The design during this period is usually accompanied by a "backstamped" rose and sometimes the words "Japan" or "Made in occupied China." Interestingly, the name Noritake was often omitted during these years. How the Steele set of china was received here in the U. S. is unknown. After World War II, occupying American forces sent the tableware home and its popularity grew in the U. S. A. Because of its durability and beauty, the company is still in production.

What a blessing it is for this lady to remember Oklahoma Baptists with her gift to the J. M. and Helen Gaskin Historical Library and Archives. The Noritake China is a welcome addition to the collection.

By Eli Sheldon, Editor

Oklahoma Baptist Historical Society

Annual Meeting – October 13, 2012 – 9 a.m.

Nogales Avenue Baptist Church

Call to Order – Martha Ray, President-Elect

“When We All Get to Heaven” – led by Bill Rains

Scripture read by Willene Pierce, and prayer by Weldon Foster.

Welcome by John Stewart, the pastor of Nogales Avenue Baptist

In the welcome Stewart noted that Joe Ingram and T. B. Lackey were previous pastors there. The church is the only Tulsa church with their own Falls Creek cabin.

BUSINESS SESSION – Moderated by Martha Ray

- A. The revision committee spoke on the changes made to the 2010 Yearbook.
- B. Eli Sheldon showed a copy of the new history of Oklahoma Baptists coloring book that will be available to messengers at the annual BGCO meeting in November. One per family is free and multiple copies are \$1.00 each.
- C. Newest commissioners introduced are: Willene Pierce and Bill Rains
- D. Commission committees currently are:
 - a. Baptist Hall of Fame
 - b. Archives
 - c. Nomination
 - d. Church History

E. Historical Secretary's report:

Eli Sheldon spoke and showed pictures of the various churches with anniversaries he has visited in 2012. He gave a brief history of the society. Although the society was formed in 1956, the first historical secretary for the BGCO was elected in 1906. The commission was formed in 1952 as a means to help the historical secretary attain and display artifacts and written histories of the Baptists of Oklahoma, both prior to and after statehood.

Where does the money come from for the commission work? It is supported by gifts and offerings from the Co-operative Program. The salary of the historical secretary is paid by the BGCO and is not a part of the commission operating budget.

Old Business:

The society members present were reminded it would be good if they encouraged their church and their friends to join the society and become a part of the work of preserving Oklahoma Baptist history.

New business:

Help will be needed at the commission booth at the annual BGCO meeting November 12-13. Any volunteers?

The society's annual meeting for 2013 is tentatively set in Dewey at the First Baptist Church.

Del Allen made the motion that the society's annual meeting in 2014 be held at OBU so society members could visit the Gaskin Baptist Archives housed in the campus library. Ramona Allen seconded the motion and it carried. Officers of the commission and the society will discuss the motion and make arrangements.

Del Allen made the motion to shift the annual society meeting to Monday noon of the BGCO annual meeting in November. Bill Crawford seconded the motion and it passed. The officers of the society and commission will discuss the feasibility of this change.

Newly elected society officers for 2013:

The nomination of Bill Rains for president elect was made by Bob Haskins, seconded by L. M. Woodson. Weldon Foster called for nominations to cease and Bill was elected by acclamation. Michael Dershem was nominated for secretary by Chan Ray, seconded by Willene Pierce. Motion passed.

BREAK

Awards and Hall of Fame Inductions

The name of Benjamin Lacy, staff evangelist, Drumright, First Baptist Church, was presented by Bill Rains as the 2012 recipient of the distinguished service award.

Weldon Foster, chairman of the church history committee, announced the 2011 winning church history was written by Donna Rich, Moore, Regency Park.

Hall of Fame inductees and monographs:

Raymond Gary, given by Martha Ray
Mordecai Fowler Ham, given by Willene Pierce
Robert S. Scales, given by Robert Haskins
Frank D. Sears, written by Marlene S. Newport
Presented by Deborah Rodgers

Benediction

Respectfully submitted,

Freida Sheldon (for Carolyn Ellenbrook)

NOTE: 35 people signed the attendance list.

1 LIFE and 14 annual new memberships were requested at this meeting. All the new annuals were members of the Frank Donald Sears' (new Hall of Fame inductee) family.

2012

Hall of Fame Inductees

Raymond Gary

Mordecai Ham

Robert Scales

Frank D. Sears

GOVERNOR RAYMOND GARY

Inducted 2012

U. S. Senator David Boren said of Gary, "Not only was he determined to follow the law, he was determined to convince the people of Oklahoma that it was the right thing to do." This is a very fitting overview of the life of Raymond Gary. It was the right thing to do!



Raymond Gary was born on a farm midway between Madill and Kingston, Oklahoma, on January 21, 1908. He lived his entire life in the district where he was born. He graduated from Madill High School in 1927, received his county teaching certificate upon high school graduation and taught for 5 years, attending Southeastern State College in Durant in the evenings and during summers. He was elected County Superintendent of Schools in 1932, the youngest in the state and served for 4 years.

Two paychecks after he began his teaching career, Raymond married his high school sweetheart, Emma Mae Purser.

Raymond started an office supply business and began manufacturing school desks and tables in 1936. He organized and became president of Sooner Oil Company in 1946.

Raymond served two terms as Marshall County School superintendent and was elected State Senator from the district of Marshall Love, and Johnston counties in 1941. He represented this district for 14 years until he was elected governor of the State of Oklahoma.

Raymond Gary became the 15th governor of Oklahoma in 1954. It has been said of him, "He had the courage to set a different kind of example."

During his time as governor, Raymond Gary became known for many things, among them:

- peaceful segregation to Oklahoma;
- consolidation of powers of the governor's office;
- the largest building program in state history with 3,500 miles of new highways constructed, including sections of 1-35 and 1-40, all without a tax increase;
- public schools were vastly improved;
- teacher's salaries were increased;
- welfare payments to old age pensioners were boosted;
- the blind, dependent children and the disabled were given greater payments and services;
- care for the mentally ill was improved; and
- many new industries came to Oklahoma.

He successfully sought a vote of the people of Oklahoma to change the state constitution so segregation by race in public schools would never occur again. One of his first actions in office was to order the "whites only" and "colored only" signs taken down from the rest rooms at the state Capitol.

During the years that he was Governor, he conducted himself as a Christian gentleman. There was no alcohol served at his inauguration. The executive mansion became a house of prayer. He scheduled a meeting each Tuesday morning for prayer and a fellowship breakfast for the state officials. He and his wife witnessed to the employees working in the mansion and led many of them to the Lord. They taught Sunday School, led Training Union, had G. A.'s weekly at the Mansion, and were faithful in tithing and visitation. Raymond was a deacon, served on many state boards, and was active at OBU.

Governor Gary was very active in the Baptist Children's Home and Retirement Villages. Gary remembers visiting a state children's

home. On one occasion he left depressed because the children were not getting the proper care. He recalls a little curly headed girl there, about 5 years old and she kept looking at him. He said, "When our eyes met, I went over and patted her on the head. She immediately grabbed me and clutched her arms around my legs. Soon all the other children were gathered around me. It was an emotional time for me because I realized these children were starved for love."

Less than 20 years later Oklahoma Baptists broke ground for a children's home on land that Gary donated. They also gave the first \$200,000 for buildings. Gary emphasized, "I believe in leaving something that will carry on after you're gone. You can make an investment in worldly projects, and lose your money, but when you invest in the Lord's work, you can't lose it."

Raymond Gary was a great man. Dr. Joe Ingram, one of Gary's closest friends said of Gary, "We recognize that when we stood with him, we stood in the presence of greatness. We thank him for his personal qualities of honesty, truthfulness, absolute integrity, and his vision and willingness to live by his principles."

Governor Gary left us these words from his father, "Son, go unhitch your plow early enough to go to church and hear the preaching."

Aren't we thankful Raymond Gary followed his father's advice?

Submitted by Martha Ray

Bibliography

The Baptist Messenger, Feb. 20, 1992

The Daily Oklahoman, March 21, 1957, May 2, 1957, May 16, 1957, January 9, 1959, Jan. 22, 1959, August 29, 1963, Sept. 9, 1965, Dec. 5, 1965, July 1, 1968, June 17, 1965, May 21, 1992

Madill Record, April 13, 1989

Personal letter to David Hall, June 1, 1993

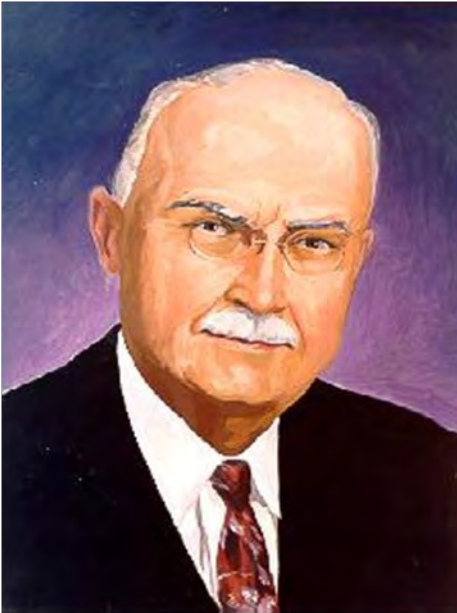
Personal letter from Robert Lloyd, May 13, 1964

Personal interview, December 15, 1993

MORDECAI HAM

Inducted 2012

A fiery evangelist from Kentucky had a lasting impact on moral and spiritual issues of his time. **Mordecai Ham** was born on a farm in Allen County Kentucky on April 2, 1877. Ham came from eight generations of preachers. He was converted under the preaching ministry of Billy Sunday.



Mordecai Ham was educated at Ogden College, Bowling Green, Kentucky and later received an honorary D.D. from Bob Jones College in Cleveland, Tennessee.

At the age of 23 he married Bessie Simmons and six months later responded to a call from God to begin a preaching ministry. Ham gave his business partner his share of their business, and borrowed money to get started in the work of the gospel. For eight months he concentrated on

prayerfully studying the Bible. His first sermon focused on the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Ham's first marriage lasted only 5 years, when Bessie died from cerebral meningitis. Although he expected to stay single, he met 15 year old Annie Laurie Smith during a revival in Pleasureville, Kentucky in 1907 and their marriage the following year lasted more than 50 years. They had 3 daughters.

Thousands of people responded to the strong gospel message as proclaimed by Mordecai Ham. Conversions attributed to him vary from 300,000 to a million individuals. The revivals he led sometimes lasted as long as eight weeks. Stories tell how he always sought out the most notorious anti-Christian man in town and sought to win him to Jesus Christ. He sometimes asked God to either save or kill those who refused to believe.

Ham spoke vehemently against modernism, evolution, atheism, card-playing, dancing, alcohol abuse, corruption and other social evils. Threats were made against his life with rocks, knives, guns, tar and feathers. He was physically assaulted more than once.

Many Ham crusades were held in Texas and Oklahoma. During a crusade in Oklahoma City in 1926, 888 people came to Christ. That fall he made a journey to London. When he returned to Oklahoma City to give a report, laymen from First Baptist Church met him at the train station and asked him to consider becoming their pastor. He was reluctant to do so, and insisted that it would take a unanimous vote for him to accept. Much to his astonishment, that is exactly what happened. He began his first and only pastorate on June 19, 1927. Two years later he resigned. Some in the church felt that he was successful in fighting moral issues, but the on-going programs and administrative matters of the church were neglected. Conflict in the church and his call to evangelism resulted in his resignation.

During a crusade in Charlotte, North Carolina in November of 1934, the young Billy Graham responded to the powerful preaching of Mordecai Ham. Billy had attended the services several evenings, and decided to sing with the choir to avoid the intense gaze of Ham. The spirit of the Lord found Billy Graham anyway and he said "yes" to Christ.

In 1947 Ham started a publication called *The Old Kentucky Home Revivalist*. He authored a book titled *The Second Coming of Christ and Revelation* and booklets *Light on the Dance*, *The Jews*, and *The Sabbath Question*.

His radio ministry was broadcast on approximately 50 stations across the southern states. He closed with, "I'll meet you on the air

until I meet you in the air.” On November 1, 1961 the earthly life of Mordecai Ham came to an end, but his influence has continued on through the lives of those who came to know and serve the Lord through his ministry.

Submitted by Willene Pierce

Bibliography

First Family, A Centennial History of the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, Bob L. Blackburn and Alvin O. Turner

Higher Praise Greatest Preachers (Mordecai Ham)

Mordecai Ham- Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Mordecai Ham, 1878-1959, Baptist Evangelist, Two biographies of Mordecai Ham

Past Masters: Mordecai Ham: The Southern Revivalist/Preaching.com

ROBERT SYLVESTER SCALES

Inducted 2012

Robert Sylvester Scales was born to Mr. and Mrs. Cicero Scales on September 11, 1910, at Greenwood, Arkansas. He died December 27, 1991, in Oklahoma City at the age of 81.

He attended public school at Greenwood and Hartford, Arkansas. He graduated from Seminole High School, Seminole, Oklahoma, in May, 1927. He attended John Brown Junior College in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, and graduated in 1930.



Before surrendering to the ministry and for one year after his ordination at First Church, Greenwood, Arkansas, on December 13, 1931, he worked as a reporter and journalist for the ***Southwest American***, Fort Smith, Arkansas, and the ***Greenwood Democrat***, Greenwood, Arkansas. He married Inez Griffith at Greenwood, Arkansas, on December 25, 1931. He received his AB Degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma, in May, 1934, where he

was president of the Ministerial Alliance and vice-president of the Senior Class. He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, for one (1) summer session in 1937. He was awarded the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Oklahoma Baptist University in 1955 and the Doctor of Letters by John Brown University in 1956.

Dr. Scales had numerous denominational experiences including being a member of the Board of Trustees of Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina, and Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Oklahoma. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and served as president in 1953 and 1954. He was chairman for the Southern Baptist Convention's Committee on Order of Business in the early 1970s. He wrote Sunday School lessons for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

He preached at the Arkansas Baptist Assembly in 1966 and at Falls Creek Baptist Assembly in the same year. He preached in Alaska in 1954; Uruguay 1956; England 1959 and visited Moscow the same year on a mission tour; Brazil 1962; and Australia in 1964.

He pastored nine (9) churches, including First Baptist Church of Bennington, Kiowa, Davenport, Lindsay, Sulphur, Durant, and Seminole, all in Oklahoma. He pastored Trinity Baptist Church in Oklahoma City from May 1, 1952, until his retirement on May 1, 1976, his 25th anniversary at the church. Scales says he chose this day to retire because, "it was the 45th anniversary of his first sermon." He gave his first sermon in the James Fork Baptist Church in Sebastian County, Arkansas.

He was active in religious and civic affairs throughout his ministry. He served two (2) terms as state president of Sooner Alcohol Narcotics Education. He was a member of the board of directors of Oklahoma City Cerebral Palsy Association and directed the religious hour of the annual Cerebral Palsy telethon since its beginning.

After his retirement from Trinity Baptist Church on May 1, 1972, he spent two (2) summers teaching at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City teaching "Organized for Ministry" and church planning courses. He also was the evangelist for several church revivals, interim pastor for several churches including Kelham Baptist Church in Oklahoma City; authored, "*A Capital Idea*," the Capital Association history released at the annual meeting in 1990; continued his hobby of collecting rare coins, and his work as artist and journalist with some of his articles appearing in the Baptist Messenger.

God called this faithful, talented, dedicated servant home to heaven on December 27, 1991, at the age of 81. His memorial service was held on December 29 at the church from which he retired,

Trinity Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, but his work and his influence continues.

Submitted by Robert E. Haskins

Bibliography

The Oklahoma Journal, Monday, October 11, 1976, front page

Oklahoma City Times – July 30, 1966

Baptist Messenger, January 10, 1991

Baptist Messenger, September 19, 1991

Saturday Oklahoma & Times, Saturday, April 23, 1977

Baptist Messenger, September 15, 1977

Baptist Messenger, February 7, 1991

Baptist Messenger, September 15, 1977

Baptist Messenger, November 2, 1978

FRANK DONALD SEARS

Inducted 2012

Frank D. Sears was born December 18, 1909 in Marlow, Oklahoma. The family moved to South Dakota, but returned when Frank was 14 to a farm his mother had homesteaded near Marlow in the Ft. Sill Wood Reserve.

Frank, at age 15, had a simple trusting conversion at Pleasant



Hill Baptist, (later named Central) west of Marlow, and was baptized at Immanuel, Duncan. Pleasant Hill Church was started by Frank's father and neighbors. His father donated many items, one being a piano, which he played during the services.

In 1929 Frank completed the two years college required teaching courses at Cameron State, but contracted smallpox and was near death.

Because of his parent's prayers, God spared him, but further complication eventually caused his death in 1963.

On May 15, 1931, Frank married his high school sweetheart, Ethel Mae Murray, the daughter of Alma and Fred Murray, half-brother to "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, the ninth governor of Oklahoma. He then taught school in the Duncan and Marlow areas. During the Great Depression the school was unable to pay his salary, but issued drafts. He was allowed to sign vouchers for groceries.

It was during this time Frank felt called by God to the ministry. In 1939, after the birth of their fourth child, Frank was ordained to

the ministry by Immanuel, Duncan. With his family: Betty Jean (1933), Frank Donald, Jr. (1935), Glenn Howard (1937), and Marlene (1939) he began serving Liberty, south of Duncan. As part-time pastor he worked for Civil Service. He then pastored at First, Krebs (1940) and Ramona (1941), which was his first full time church.

In 1943, he was called to Carr City near Seminole, and was able to attend OBU. He would catch rides to Shawnee, and with the ten cents Ethel would search for in the house, he would ride the bus across Shawnee to OBU. Carr Church was on a highway and couples would often stop there to be married. Any payment was used for his education.

Before graduation in 1955, a fifth child, David Lee was born. He then accepted the call to First, Stratford. His love for missions at Carr and Stratford helped to sponsor several mission churches and the development of many young preachers. In 1950 he was called as Arbuckle Association Missionary (now DOM). In 1951 he accepted the call to First, Healdton, where he served until his death in 1963.

Frank's other accomplishments include terms or positions as association and pastor's conference moderator, Baptist Foundation Advisory Council, BGCO Board of Directors, Falls Creek teacher and guard, and *Baptist Messenger* articles. His civic work included Lion's Club President, Chamber of Commerce, Quarterback Club President, Ministerial Alliance, and Red Cross Chairman.

Frank's first love was to serve God and preach. He also loved music, and he and Ethel sang many times in churches. Their five children also loved singing together. Their son, Frank Donald, Jr., served as a minister of music and education, and their first daughter, Betty, directs music at Central Baptist.

Many times Frank combined playing the ukulele or piano with his chalk talk skills. He also used his fishing and golf to witness for the Lord. Many people sought his advice knowing of his genuine concern. He is remembered for his untiring zeal and faith. His stalwart appearance and friendly handshake helped leave a legacy for all to the glory of God.

Submitted by Marlene Sears Newport—his daughter.



DONNA RICH RECEIVES GASKIN CHURCH HISTORY AWARD

Donna Rich, a member of Regency Park, Moore, received the coveted Gaskin Church History Award at the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma annual meeting, Tuesday, November 13th, 2012, at First, Moore. Mrs. Rich won by writing *Back Glance: Forward Vision*, which is a 75 year history of the church. The church celebrated its 75th anniversary this past year.

The task of writing the history was made more difficult because the May 3rd, 1999 tornado destroyed the church and all the previous historical records. Donna gives credit for most of the work on the church history to Donna Stanley, who helped scan materials, Matt Wheeler for putting the church minutes on the computer, and Don Stephens who assisted in computerizing the older histories and working on the final printing of the book. Obviously, a lot of work goes into producing an award winning church history.

Donna, and her deceased husband Don, were blessed with two children. She has been a member of Regency Park for over 36 years and has been a ladies Sunday school teacher for over 30 of those years. She is also involved in the church's "Sew and Sew" ministry for military servicemen, the "Hugs Project" of the church, and has helped in the "Care Closet" clothing room of the church.

Mrs. Rich was employed for over 30 years in the life insurance business and served as a brokerage consultant and agent. Her hobbies include gardening and writing. She has several published poems and developed children's story books (unpublished) about her grandchildren.



BENJAMIN C. LACY

2012 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Ben Lacy, staff evangelist, FBC, Drumright, is the recipient of the 2012 Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission Distinguished Service Award. Bro. Lacy and his wife Wilma have been life-long servants in the truest sense.

They are both retired educators. Ben began his college at Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University), but after two years he entered the U. S. Army and served as the company radio operator while in Austria.

Mr. Lacy was discharged in 1955 and in August that year he married Wilma. God has blessed them with two beautiful daughters. They moved immediately to Shawnee, Oklahoma and Ben enrolled in Oklahoma Baptist University. He graduated from OBU fully intending to serve as a pastor, but he states that God changed his plans. God called him to be a teacher and bi-vocational minister.

Ben graduated in 1958 and they had their first daughter, Vicki in June. He was ordained to the ministry that year at First, Macomb, where he was serving as pastor.

During his early ministry, they served for eight years as missionaries to the Navaho Indians at Kayenta, Arizona. While there, they helped establish a Baptist mission. Since returning to Oklahoma in 1968, Ben has been a pastor, interim pastor, supply preacher, and evangelist in almost every church in Cimarron Association. He and Wilma live in Drumright where they have taught school and he served 20 years as elementary principal.

He is currently serving as moderator of the association, and in past years has been on several committees, special projects, DOM search committees, and a member of the association executive committee.



UNCLE JIMMY AND THE BGCO ANNUAL MEETING 1962

“WHY DO YOU LOVE BEING A BAPTIST?”

Many things have changed in the past 50 years in Oklahoma and among Oklahoma Baptists. In other ways, some things don't really change at all. For example, the technology of life has changed, but the Baptist people are still people who love the Lord and seek His will.

There seems to be a never ending tie between Baptists and their love for their churches and denomination. Why is that? To see a brief response of such a question requires us to journey back fifty years to the BGCO annual meeting of 1962. It was at this meeting that Dr. James Newton Owens, more commonly known as “Uncle Jimmy” was asked to represent Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) by giving his form of report to the convention.

The meeting was being held in November 1962 in the John Wesley Raley Chapel, on the campus of OBU, at Shawnee, Oklahoma. Jimmy Owen got his nickname from the 1922 senior class of OBU. In 1922 Dean J. W. Jent recommended Owen's to the OBU faculty as a language professor and director of the men's hall. The senior class, not wanting to look upon him as a class sponsor, chose the more personal name of "Uncle Jimmy." The name became known throughout the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. His wife Julia was called "Aunt Jimmy", and this couple provided their home as a place of comfort and love for homesick students and anyone needing friendship.

Dr. Owen presented the following speech at the 1962 convention. While this event was called the "OBU Hour" in the convention schedule, it is evident Dr. Owens was not just addressing the messengers, but also many students from his forty years of service at OBU. The title of the message was apparently not presented, but was entered in the records as "The Divine Tie", which focused on the bond of love between Baptist people, and especially those on campus.

The Divine Tie

A lady graduate of the class of 1919 visited recently in our home. She, of course, recalled the fact that she was a resident member of the girls' dormitory when the young ladies resided on the third floor of Shawnee Hall and their dining room was in the basement of the same and only building on campus. This building served for all purposes. The Baptists were in such a hurry to get OBU in action that the cook stove had not been connected. The first meal for these OBU young ladies was prepared by Mrs. Stubblefield over an open fire out on the campus. From that hour until these Times of Greatness, OBU has had a long, arduous struggle. I could reminisce at length, but I must not.

After I was asked to appear on this podium, I went in and asked the president what I was to say. After some thought, he said, "Just stand up and tell them that you still love them." Then he showed me a picture of him and Senator Kerr. From the smiling face of the senator I got a fair speechless message which seemed to say, "Keep your hands out of my pockets." Next I looked into the eyes of Dr. Scales and saw a serious meaningful message which indicated that he would be highly pleased if you would pray our heavenly Father,

“That He gives wisdom to those to whom has been given the authority of governing and of teaching in this university. That the students may grow in grace day by day, that their minds be enlightened, that their hearts be purified, that their wills be sanctified, and that they may be raised up a never-failing succession of benefactors to this school.”

Now let me give you my message. I do still love every-one of you and will to my last day. I love you because OBU first loved me and gave me a name which opened the hearts of many students who were in distress. This enabled me to show them the way of life more clearly. For this I want to thank you. Even my parents loved me before I loved them and in the same manner our heavenly Father loved each of us before we loved Him. I love you because you are the visible representatives of the invisible Divinity and you are mortals that will take on immortality. You are earthen vessels containing heavenly treasures. Here you are dealing with the soul of things, with the spirit of man, with the mood and temper of his heart. You are the only messengers that can bring a lasting peace to this troubled world. You have been endowed from on high to present the only permanent security which mortal man can have.

I love you because you are the living link between this people and God. Your task is to enrich their minds and stimulate the graces of those who listen to you. You must live so close to God that His voice will incline the heart of your people to worship, to trust, to hope, and through the medium of devotion to prepare themselves for the engagements of life. You are living in spiritual sympathy with your people and at the same time you are living in the secret places of the Most High in order to know the Divine purpose of all things.

I love you also because you are the link between the past and the future. All things are being created anew. Civilization has expanded its influence and consolidated its empire. We have almost established a new vocabulary. Some words have taken on a completely new meaning. You must present the truth in a new and better light. The ages are on. We must not allow this unity to be broken.

I love you likewise because you are studying the character of God and learning the secrets of truth so that you may understand the necessities and desires of the human heart. Your wisdom is a flower that blooms and blossoms only in eternal paradise. That

which is within you is daily being translated into beautiful actions, beneficent service, kindness that converts sinners, and the love that overcomes opposition.

May the hearts of every one of you consent to the law which demands obedience and may you ever have the liberty to obey our heavenly Father, because this liberty is the beginning of the education of the soul. May your minds continually move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth. May our leaders ever be men of strong minds, great heart, true faith, and ready hands, and may they always live above the fog in public duty and private thinking. Brethren, be ye filled with divine care for divine work.

Eli Sheldon, Editor

Sources: Gaskin, J. M., *View From Bison Hill*. OBU: Bison Press, 1985

The Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle, Vol. V, No. 2, pgs. 41-43

Raley, Helen T., "J. N. 'Uncle Jimmy' Owens." *Oklahoma*

Baptist Hall of Fame, Vol. 1, Marlin Hawkins, editor, Oklahoma Baptist Printing, 2006.

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.

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

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;
Given by Lemuel Ball

Joseph Alexander Gaskin, Cartersville;
Given by J. M. Gaskin

Jim Glaze, Montgomery, Alabama;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

George Hill, Coalgate;
Given by Margaret Hill

George Hill, Coalgate;
Given by J. M. Gaskin

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

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

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

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

Charles Mackey, Durant;
Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

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

Marie Ratliff, Wilburton
Given by Center Point Baptist Church

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

William G. Tanner, Belton, Texas;
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

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