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**BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION.**  
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**THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF OUR CONVENTION.**

1830 to 1840.

In 1840 the Baptist State Convention had been at work for ten years and had established its right to live. Looking over the scanty denominational records left us of that period one is impressed by the fact that the founders of the Convention appreciated the greatness and importance of their undertaking and that they had unwavering faith in its final success. They set forth clearly to themselves and others what they meant to do. To improve the rising ministry, to promote the Missionary spirit and increase Missionary labor in the State, and to co-operate with the Baptist General Convention in the work of Foreign Missions. This they meant to do by uniting the churches throughout the State in the movement. Clear-sighted, single-hearted men were they, and of heroic faith. Thomas Merredith, speaking for them all, said in 1830: "We venture to believe that it [the Convention] promises more to the Baptists of North Carolina than any human institution ever offered to their consideration; and that it shall exist and multiply its advantages when its projectors and present supporters shall rest from their labors amid the clods of the valley."

Having organized the Convention, they had but one way to make known the fact to the churches in the State, ~~to present its claims.~~ It was to send out an agent. Samuel Wait, young, vigorous, well educated, full of zeal, preferring to conciliate, but ready to fight, if necessary, and thoroughly equipped for it, was selected. A short experience taught him the need of a newspaper as a helper in his work, and at the second and third sessions of the Convention the matter was under consideration. In 1833 the *Baptist Inquirer*, now, and for many years past, the *Biblical Recorder*, was started.

The founding of a College was not contemplated at first. The young ministers were sent to John Armstrong, who made no charge for tuition, and after he left the State, to Carter Harrison and George W. Thompson. But experience soon taught them the need of an institution of their own and of higher grade; and so in 1833 they laid the foundations of Wake Forest College, opening the institution in 1834 with 70 students.

They did not at first propose to found any female schools, but they were not long in finding out that they must do this also. In 1836, Dr. Wm. Hooper, chairman of a committee to consider the matter, reported adversely. It came up again in 1838, and Thomas Meredith made a report recommending that such a school be started in Raleigh. Under J. J. Finch and Dr. Hooper, the Female Seminary at the Capital did well for a few years. Later also, under Dr. A. McDowell, until he removed to Murfreesboro, to have charge of the Institute at that place, which was just getting ready for its splendid career.

These enterprises arose slowly and successively, as the necessity for them was made manifest. Not so with the work of State Missions. They began

to push it vigorously from the first. Samuel Wait, nominally the agent, was really a missionary, with the State for his field. Thomas Crocker, "a mighty man of valor" in his day, was also appointed missionary at the same time. At the second session, four missionaries were appointed, in addition to the general agent, to labor in New Hanover, Onslow, Randolph, Stokes, Wake, Johnston and Sampson counties. At the next session, five missionaries were sent out; and the Board reported a revival, and the organization of a church, at Smithfield, under the labors of Jas. Dennis, one of the appointees. In 1832 an appropriation of one hundred dollars was made, to aid the church at Wilmington in supporting her pastor. A little later similar aid was extended to the church at Raleigh. In 1834 there were eight missionaries. One of them, James Thomas, reported the organization of five new churches. The church at Lumberton, one of the number, starting with 25 members, had increased to 80 during the year. The missionaries sent out by the Convention had preached more than 1,000 sermons, and there had been gracious revivals in many places.

Salaries were small in those days. Dr. Wait received a dollar a day at first; later, only 75 cts. a day. The salaries of the missionaries ranged from ten dollars to twenty-five dollars per month. The labor was immense. The starting of the Convention had stirred into unusual activity all the enemies of benevolent effort. Documents were scattered through the churches, denouncing and misrepresenting the new enterprise, and preachers declaimed against it with great vehemence. It was needful to meet these misrepresentations, and this could only be done by the missionaries and agents of the Convention. Hence the wide range they took, some of them being assigned to several counties, while they had the State for their field. Traveling was done on horseback or in sulkies. John Culpeper's report for one year: Travelled 365 days, preached 253 sermons and attended six Associations and thirteen protracted meetings. Francis Hawley travelled 350 days. William Jones preached 206 sermons and traveled 2,960 miles in 239 days. Robert McNabb made over 1,400 miles in 201 days and preached 218 sermons; for another year, he reports 350 days and 3,400 miles of travel and 325 sermons. Humphrey Posey, in the counties west of the Blue Ridge, preached 91 sermons in three months of travel, his salary ten dollars worth of tracts. He prepared the way in that region for what is now the Western Baptist Convention. Jas. Thomas, one year, visited most of the towns, villages and churches in 44 counties, traveling 4,000 miles and preaching upwards of 400 sermons. It was in this way that the plans and purposes of the Convention were made known and the missionary spirit quickened into life among the churches.

As this missionary spirit increased in the State, Associations began to organize for supplying the destitution within their own limits, virtually withdrawing from the Convention in this department of labor. This tendency increased from year to year, until most of the larger Associations were carrying on their own system of home missions, and the Convention was greatly hindered, by the lack of means for carrying out the original purpose of its founders, "to supply destitute churches and sections of the country within the limits of

the State with the preaching of the gospel." It is only within a few years, under the administration of the present Corresponding Secretary, that the brethren of the whole State have begun to realize the importance of working together, and that the purpose of the founders of the Convention is beginning to be realized.

It has been alleged sometimes that in those early days our fathers made a mistake in not cultivating the towns. These they did not neglect, but they bestowed more labor on the country districts; and time has vindicated their wisdom. The towns have been built up by immigration from the country around; and so in counties where there is a large Baptist population the towns have strong Baptist churches. Oxford, Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill and Shelby afford illustrations. It was a lack of Baptist strength in Guilford and Mecklenburg that made the work of establishing churches in Greensboro and Charlotte so slow, difficult and expensive.

Our fathers rightly judged, with Dr. Wait, that the principal thing was to develop and multiply the churches at home. These prospering, every other department at home and abroad prospers; these languishing, the others decline proportionately.

Let us strive together even more earnestly from year to year to realize their spirit, until there shall be a Baptist church in every neighborhood, and from these churches shall flow out streams of blessing that shall gladden the whole earth.

J. D. HUFHAM.

**HOME MISSIONS.**

Please let me have space in the *MISSIONARY WORKER* for a few words about Home Missions. My text may be found on page 36 of the Minutes of the Baptist State Convention, and reads as follows:

"Elder C. Durham offered the following, which was adopted:

"Resolved, That we do heartily sympathize with our brethren of the Home Mission Board in the great work of which they have charge, and that we will endeavor to raise for them \$1,000 by the 1st of January, 1886."

There is nothing to be said about what this text would mean in Greek or Hebrew, so, omitting introductory remarks, we will pass on to consider—

1. The "great work" alluded to in the text. The greatness of this work cannot be expressed by arithmetical figures, for these cannot convey any adequate idea of the value of one soul, much less the value of thousands of souls, but it may be well to say that for the six months ending in October last there had been about 2,500 baptisms by the missionaries of this Board, and in the same time more than 1,200 persons had joined by letter under their ministrations, so that the work of this Board in these six months added about 4,000 members to Baptist churches. Now, try to realize how many hearts were gladdened by these labors, how many doubters were confirmed in the faith, how many sorrowing ones were comforted, how many dying ones were cheered, and how many influences were set in motion that will go on widening and working down to the end of time, and you will begin to agree with the text in the statement concerning the greatness of this work.

2. The pledge of hearty sympathy with this Board. This pledge was made by the representatives of the Baptists of North Carolina—by *your*