

Biographical Sketch of the Life of
Albert Peyton Woodfin
Pastor of the Rome Baptist Church (now FBC) 1867-1868

Albert Peyton (A. P.) Woodfin was born November 13, 1840, in Richmond, Virginia. He earned an A. B. degree from Richmond College in 1861. On December 19, 1861, he married Anna Lawson Smith in Fauquier County, Virginia. She was born in Culpeper County, Virginia, the daughter of Joseph T. and Sarah W. Smith. A. P. was the son of George and Martha E. Woodfin. A. P. and Anna's marriage record gives their address as Ashland, Hanover County, Virginia, and shows his occupation as "Minister of the Gospel."

He pastored the Ashland Baptist Church until the Civil War caused him to move to Campbell County, near Lynchburg, and there he pastored some country churches farther from the war.

After the war he was hired by the Southern Baptist Convention to go to Texas to do mission work. Once there he determined he did not like being there and decided to return to Virginia. According to the *Christian Index and South-Western Baptist*, in Atlanta, Georgia, on his way home passed through Rome, Georgia, and the First Baptist Church did not have a pastor, so he preached for them and they called him as their pastor. He accepted, and moved to Rome in 1867, where he preached with much acceptance and success, until forced to give up the church by the failure of health.

According to church minutes from August 30, 1868, he wrote the following letter:

Dear Brethren

Seventeen months ago at your request, I left my native State, to cast my lot with you. I had hoped that the union then formed between us would extend, at least through a term of years, but the Providence of God orders otherwise.

Several months since our Heavenly Father laid upon me the hand of disease. During most of this time I had flattered myself with hopes of recovery, and have refused to entertain the painful thought of severing my connection with you. It has now however been demonstrated that I am no longer able to discharge the duties of the pastorate, to do Justice to you, and the cause of Christ which you represent, and that were you willing to accept of me a partial service to render even that would be at the peril of my life.

Believing that rest from the active duties of the ministry may be the means of my restoration to health and that I may be thus prepared for future usefulness, it becomes my duty to relinquish at once those duties, and to resign again to your hand the high and holy trust which you committed to mine – I regret that the state of my health prevents my giving the promised notice of three months, and I must ask that the resignation take immediate effect. In leaving you my brethren (for myself) I think I can say that whatever mistakes have been made, I have desired to do the right, and to do you good, and for you I can say, that your uniform kindness, your prayers in my behalf, your cooperation, your many tokens of Christian affection, have given you a place in my heart, which I trust you will fill to eternity –

Finally Brethren; farewell, Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you –
Yours in Jesus
A. P. Woodfin

His resignation was accepted with reluctance and the church agreed to pay his salary until the end of the year. The church then drew up the following resolution:
“Whereas our beloved Pastor Brother A. P. Woodfin has felt called because of failing health to tender his resignation, Be it resolved that we accept this resignation with heartfelt regret, concurring with our Brother in the necessity for such action, we extend to him in parting our warmest sympathies, with the assurance of our continued love, and prayerful interest in his recovery. We commend him to the Brethren wherever he may go, as a faithful and able minister of our Lord and Savior, and fervently pray that soon his health may be restored, his strength recovered and he again preaching Jesus. Resolved that Brother Woodfin’s salary be continued to January 1st 1869 and the Treasurer be instructed to pay him \$233.00 the balance due him at that time.”

The Tri-Weekly Courier, Rome, Georgia, December 1, 1868, reported he left on the train with the kindest regards and warm affections of all who knew him. The article added “He is compelled to abandon the work of the ministry on account of a pulmonary disease. May that Gospel which he so earnestly preached, be an unfailing source of consolation and joy to him in his affliction.” A large number of the congregation of this beloved pastor and members of other churches and citizens, went down to the train to see him off.

When he left Rome he went to Penfield in Greene County, Georgia. The 1870 Penfield census shows that Albert Woodfin and his wife Anna, along with their two children Annie and William were living near A. P.’s brother, William G. Woodfin, who was a professor at Mercer University, which was located in Penfield at that time.

The minutes of the Penfield Baptist Church show that in 1869, Albert and his wife transferred their membership from Rome in June.

Albert Peyton Woodfin died October 3, 1870. His little son, William Woodfin, shown in the 1870 census, preceded him in death and was buried at Penfield. A.P. Woodfin died and was buried in Greensboro and his son’s body was moved next to his body in the cemetery.

After A. P. Woodfin died, the Rome Baptist Church composed a letter of condolence which is recorded in the church minutes and shown below:

October 23, 1870

The committee on resolutions in memory of our late Pastor Bro. Woodfin submitted the following which was adopted.

Whereas, Our Heavenly Father, in his inscrutable wisdom, has been pleased to remove by death from his earthly pilgrimage our late, and much loved Pastor Elder A. P. Woodfin, and whereas we deeply deplore the loss to the Church on earth, of an ambassador for Christ, whose life and labors were characterized by such marked fidelity to the cause of our common Master, and who was still but in the morning of life, Therefore

Resolved, That whilst we humbly submit to this afflicting dispensation, of him who doeth all things, after the council of his own will, we sincerely mourn the loss of our Brother, Stricken by disease in early life in the midst of his loved and successful labors in the Master's vineyard, and now swept away by the hand of death.

Resolved, That our warmest sympathies be hereby tendered to the bereaved family with the Christian hope, and the Christian consolation that though he cannot return to them they may go to him, and that though his mortal body now sleeps in the grave, it will come forth a glorious body, and be re-united with his now happy Spirit

Resolved, that these proceedings be entered upon our Church Record and a copy of the same be sent to the family of the Deceased.

(Signed) J H Nowlin }
(Signed) J Branham Jr } Committee
(Signed) E F Shropshire }

A copy of the same was sent to family in accordance with the Resolution
Clerk

Below is a picture of the marker in the Greensboro Cemetery:



and his little
WILLIE
by those who loved him.
*Remember the words
I spake unto you while
I was yet with you*

After the death of her husband, Anna Woodfin and their daughter moved back to Virginia. No known picture of A. P. Woodfin exists, but below is a picture of his wife and daughter.

