

**THE ROME BAPTIST CHURCH,  
1835-1865**



**Robert G. Gardner**

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*1835-1865***

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

*Rome, Georgia*

1975

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## ANTEBELLUM ROME

For a century after the founding of Georgia, the area now known as Floyd County was in the hands of the Cherokee Indians. As the nineteenth century continued, however, whites were increasingly present. In 1821 Missionary Station was established near what has since been called Coosa, to which Rev. Hugh Quinn came about 1827. A combination of natural factors—three rivers and surrounding fertile and scenic territory—attracted other whites not principally interested in spreading the gospel. Late in 1832 the Georgia legislature divided the Cherokee territory into ten large counties, one of which was Floyd. The following year the legislature chose Livingston as the county seat. In the spring of 1834, five men were instrumental in beginning a village which they agreed to call Rome, and within a few months the state legislature authorized removal of the county seat to this new location. The whites were left in undisputed control of the area in 1838 as the Indians were mercilessly moved to the West.

The county and city grew in population as the years passed. In 1840 4,441 persons lived in Floyd County; the number became 8,205 in 1850 and 15,195 in 1860. Of the 1860 total, 9,269 were white, 5,913 were slaves, and 13 were free blacks. Not until 1860 is the population of Rome definitely known—by then it was made up of 2,078 whites, 1,919 slaves, and 13 free blacks, for a total of 4,010.

The future prosperity of Rome was prophesied in 1836 by the arrival of the first steamboat on the Coosa River from Greensport, Alabama. In the years to follow, numerous other boats regularly moved in and out of Rome on both the Coosa and Oostanaula. By the mid-1840s, the community was linked by the Rome Railroad with Kingston, where connection could be made with the main line leading to Chattanooga, Atlanta, and beyond. From the earliest days stagecoach lines permitted rough and slow travel to the outside world.

Gradually the business, industrial, and professional life of Rome enlarged. By 1837 the village had a newspaper and bank, and others followed when those ceased to exist. Businesses of all sorts were present: hotels, dry goods stores, groceries, druggists, clothing and millinery shops, tailors, jewelers, crockery dealers, hardware stores, livery stables, bakeries, and book, stationery, and music stores. Factories manufactured furniture and machinery of many kinds, including the first locomotive made in the South from local materials. A number of doctors, dentists, and lawyers offered their services to their fellow Romans—running frequent advertise-

ments in the local newspapers.

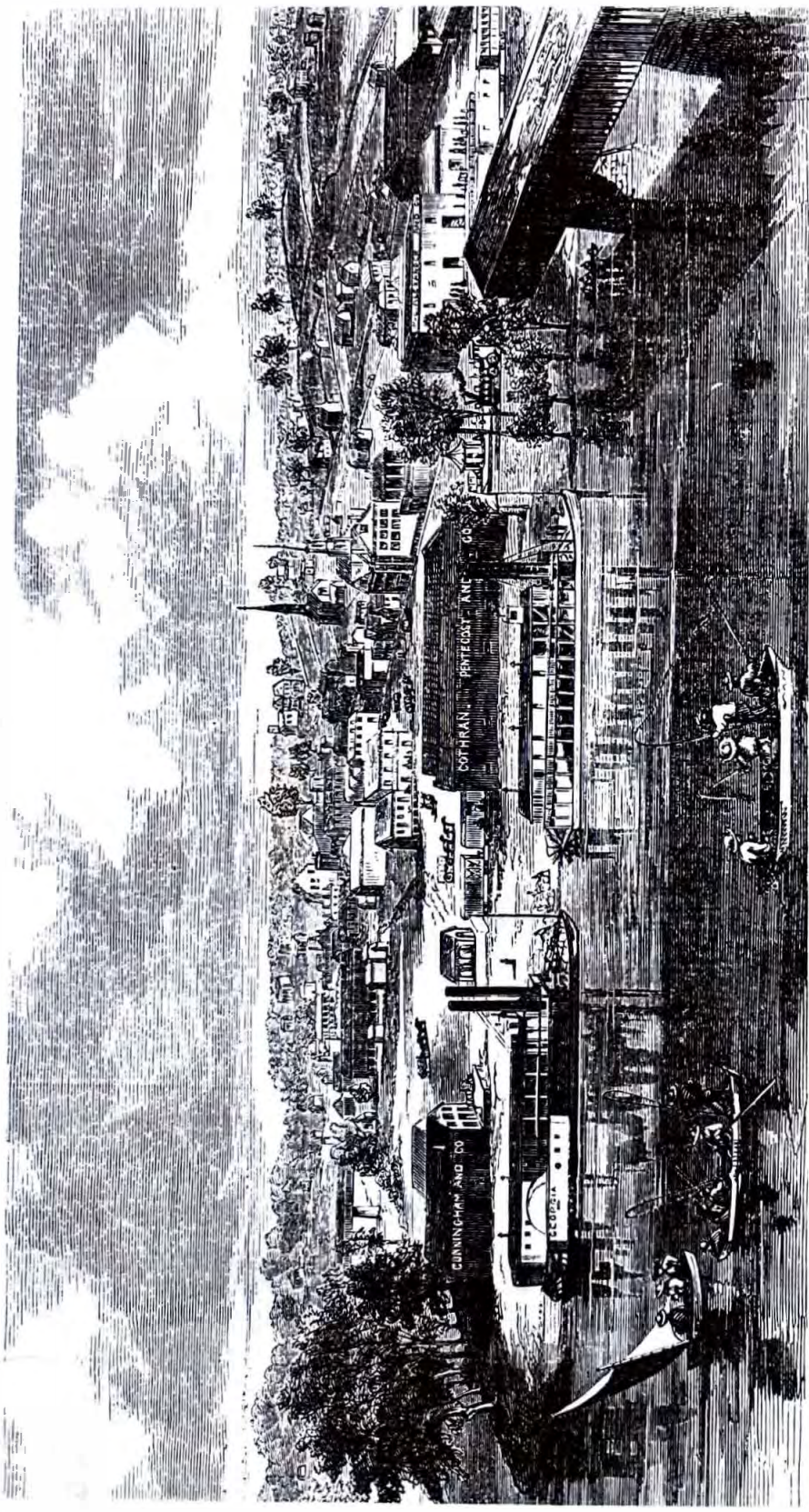
The cultural, recreational, and educational life of the community was not forgotten. Concerts, tableaux, visiting troupes, banquets, dances, patriotic observances, lodge meetings, and political gatherings came to be a regular part of local life. Several grammar and high schools existed for varying lengths of time, and in 1857 the Rome Female College was founded.

The nature of Rome's earliest government is unknown, but eventually it included an elected mayor and board of aldermen. A city marshall—and a jail—seem to have been required from the beginning. A volunteer fire company was formed in 1850, successfully coping with every major fire except the 1858 blaze that consumed most of one block on Broad Street.

Four permanent churches were organized in Rome during the antebellum period, reported by a local newspaper as being filled with "intelligent and attentive" congregations hearing sermons "that would be listened to with interest and profit by any similar assembly in the State." The oldest was the Baptist congregation, founded in 1835. This was followed by the Methodist church in 1840, which soon erected a wooden structure on the corner of Etowah and Alpine streets (now East Sixth Avenue and East Second Street). This was replaced by a brick building—now occupied by the Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church—in 1852, the first year that the church enjoyed a resident pastor. Saint Peter's Episcopal Church was formed in 1844, building its first house of worship in 1849 at Court and Bridge streets (now East First Street and East Fifth Avenue), near where the First Church of Christ, Scientist is now located. In that same year the first resident pastor was secured by the congregation. The Presbyterian church moved in 1845 from Livingston, where it had been started in 1833, and employed a resident pastor. A building was occupied on Broad and King (now East Seventh Avenue) streets in 1849—the present site of the Metropolitan United Methodist Church. Seven years later the 150-member congregation occupied a ten-thousand-dollar structure on Maiden Lane and Court Street (now East Third Avenue and East First Street), the sanctuary still in use.

#### *BAPTISTS BEFORE 1835*

More than two hundred years before coming to Rome, the Baptist movement originated among English-speaking residents of Holland in 1609. Extending the Puritan protest against the Church of England by insisting upon believer's baptism, a gathered church,



Drawing of Rome made in 1856 from Myrtle Hill. The Baptist and Presbyterian churches are near the center of the picture, with the Baptist steeple on the left. This is the earliest known picture of the Rome Baptist Church.

and religious liberty, these Baptists returned to their native land about 1611, beginning a church near London. While continuing to expand slowly in England, the movement spread to the colony of Rhode Island in 1638 when Roger Williams founded the Providence Baptist Church. Thanks to domestic conversions and to immigration, Baptists grew gradually in New England, in the middle colonies, and after the 1660s in the South. Sizable increases in membership and marked vitality came after 1740 as a consequence of the First Great Awakening. When Baptists wholeheartedly supported the American Revolution and the demands for religious freedom, they achieved widespread—though not unanimous—approval in the infant nation. The emerging frontier opened virgin fields to conquer and Baptist farmer-preachers were equal to the challenge. A national missionary body was started in 1814 as the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States (familarly called the Triennial Convention because it met every three years). Stemming from it were Columbian College of Washington, D.C. (1821), the American Baptist Tract Society (later the American Baptist Publication Society) (1824), and the American Baptist Home Mission Society (1832). Through these societies and institution, a national Baptist consciousness and structure were being formed.

Meantime, of course, the Carolinas and Virginia had experienced the introduction of Baptists well before Georgia, but some were present in Savannah at or almost immediately after its founding in 1733. The first Baptist church in the colony came in 1772 at Kiokee near Augusta. Others followed quickly, leading to the formation of district associations—the first being the Georgia Baptist Association in 1784. Attempting to be a statewide organization in support of education and missions, the General Baptist Association for the State of Georgia (later called the Georgia Baptist Convention) had its feeble start in 1822. Under its general supervision, in 1833 Mercer University at Penfield was initiated. Friendly to its objectives was the *Christian Index*, a weekly Baptist newspaper moved to Georgia in the same year. By 1835, Baptists in Georgia had organized at least 583 churches with 41,810 members in 21 associations led by 298 ordained or licensed ministers.

MAY 16, 1835

The manuscript minutes of the Rome Baptist Church furnish the fullest account of the congregation's origin. "A Presbytery Met agreeably, to the call [of] certain brethren & sisters, scattered in the

vicinity of Rome" on May 16, 1835, probably in the residence of a participant. Evan Pearson, a pastor from Cass (now Bartow) County, and Hugh Quinn, pastor of the Pisgah Baptist Church at Missionary Station, made up the presbytery and led in the ceremony that occurred. Only five other persons were surely present: Chapman S. Shields, Sarah (Mrs. Chapman S.) Shields, John Davis, Thomas H. Cliett (an ordained minister), and Frances (Mrs. Hugh) Quinn. The "divine service" mentioned so briefly was probably comprised of prayers, hymns sung without the use of instruments, the reading of the Bible, and sermons by each of the ministers. A recess undoubtedly followed. After the tiny group reassembled, Pearson and Quinn called for the presentation of church letters. This was done by the other five, their letters were read, and "they were formed in fellowship . . . ." The twelve-point confession of faith from the Flint River Baptist Association of central Georgia was read and adopted with minor modification. This Calvinistic statement contained articles concerning the Trinity, the Bible, election, original sin, human depravity, the imputation of Christ's merits, the Holy Ghost, the perseverance of the saints, the ordinances, the Second Coming and Last Judgment, heaven and hell, and the ministry. The minutes continue: "Then proceeded to give the right [hand] of fellowship, after which prayer was offered by brother Pearson, the charge was given by brother Quinn, and then proclaimed a Church."

Two items of business occupied the further attention of this new congregation. First, they chose Pearson as their moderator and "invited visiting Brethren to seats with us . . . ." By this action so customary among Baptists of the period, they requested ministers not affiliated with their church to help them conduct business, Quinn doubtless being the only one to accept their invitation. Second, they "opened a door for the reception of Members, by Letter or experience . . . ." Quinn "came forward, and not having his letter, produced vouchers proving his regular dismissal, from his church . . . ." The original membership of the Rome church was thus raised to six. The conference was then brought to a close, probably with prayer by one or more of the participants.

It should be noted at the outset that the formation of the church had been publicized in advance; although the group was small, it did not meet in secret. Since there was not a Baptist district association then in existence, obviously the cooperation of such a body could not be obtained—but both members of the presbytery, as well as members of the new church, became active in the Coosa Baptist Association which was soon organized in the area. From its

origin, the Rome congregation has affirmed the proper place of connectionalism in church life.

*CONFESSIONS OF FAITH,  
THE CONSTITUTION, AND DECORUMS*

The Rome Baptist Church accepted three documents that provided the body with corporate direction. As already observed, at its organizational meeting on May 16, 1835, the group adopted the Flint River confession of faith. Two years later, on May 14, 1837, this action was reversed when the church accepted the confession of faith of the Coosa Baptist Association. The eight articles of this Calvinistic document discussed the Trinity, the Bible, total depravity, divine election, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to sinners, the perseverance of the saints, good works as evidence of salvation, and eschatology.

The only constitution of the church in use before the Civil War was adopted on June 10, 1837. Its first article affirmed that the congregation be called "the Baptist Church of Christ at Rome" and that it meet monthly for divine worship. The other five articles dealt with administering the ordinances, conducting church conferences, accepting members, disciplining each other "in Charity, and in the Spirit of brotherly Love," and supporting financially the minister of the church.

The first decorum or gospel order was also adopted on June 10, 1837. In six "orders" it affirmed that a visible church is formed of "faithful persons" who have covenanted with the Lord and with each other, that proper discipline is for the reclamation of the disorderly, that the two ordinances must be administered "only by orderly Baptist Ministers, who have been regularly ordained," that baptism is by immersion and only for believers, that the Lord's Supper is only for "regularly baptized Church Members" (closed communion), and that "every Heaven born Soul" has a duty to be an active member of the visible church.

A second decorum was accepted in June of 1844, consisting of twenty brief articles. These provided careful direction for the conduct of church conferences and insisted upon faithful attendance by "free male members . . . ." It concluded with this statement: "Resolved, That these Rules together with the constitution of the Church be read quarterly at our communion meetings." An article providing for the recognition of correspondents (official visitors) from other Baptist churches was added in May 1845.

This was supplanted by a third decorum on January 9, 1852. A

long statement of fourteen "rules," it, simply restated and enlarged upon the earlier documents. Provision was made for the decorum and church covenant to be read quarterly and "on motion . . . at any time at the request of any member."

A committee was named "to prepare a manual for the government of our church" on October 23, 1861. Two months later the "Manual & Rules of Order were recommended and adopted," but no copy has survived. Perhaps this was "the Manual recently published" that remained to be paid for on March 13, 1863, when three men were appointed "to secure means" for retiring that debt.

### *SIX NONRESIDENT PASTORS*

#### HUGH QUINN, 1835-1836

For the first fourteen years of its life, the Rome Baptist Church was served by a succession of six nonresident pastors. The first was Hugh Quinn, a fifty-year-old resident of nearby Missionary Station and pastor of the Pisgah Baptist Church. Earlier in his career he had been a physician, a professor in a medical college, and a missionary to the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina and northwest Georgia. Strangely enough, there is no record of when he was called as pastor. He and his wife were charter members of the church, joining on May 16, 1835, and he probably became pastor then or shortly thereafter. His work in Rome would necessitate his coming the ten miles into town for preaching on the second or third Sunday and the conference the day before. When he and Mrs. Quinn removed their letters about August 1836, presumably his pastorate was concluded. For reasons that are no longer clear he returned his letter to the Rome church in 1837, probably retaining his membership there until 1846. At that time he moved to Mississippi, where he practiced medicine and preached until his death in 1864.

#### JOHN CRAWFORD, 1837

Late in 1836 the church extended an invitation to John Crawford for the following year, and he accepted. A farmer-preacher who had recently moved to Cassville from South Carolina, he traveled to Rome for the weekend of the second Sunday, probably asking for and receiving no pay. In June 1837 the church appointed a committee "to arrange preaching on all occasions when visiting brethren of the Ministry are in attendance," but the success of their efforts can-

not be determined. A misunderstanding arose in August between Crawford and the deacons when non-Baptists were served communion, resulting in an agreement that "in [the] future [we] endeavor to avoid a Similar occurrence." This satisfied Crawford, who came back for the remainder of the year, but obviously the situation was not entirely harmonious. He was not called for 1838, and the commendatory resolution was brief: "That we tender our thanks to Bro. John Crawford, for his labors with us as Minister of the Gospel; for the past year."

#### WILLIAM WOOD, 1838

William Wood was unanimously selected, coming almost every second Sunday and the Saturday preceding from Cave Spring, where he was also the pastor. Little is known of him; from 1838 to 1848 he lived and served churches in northwest Georgia—before and after those years, his work is in total eclipse. While Wood was with the Rome church, the body requested Elijah Lumpkin, a member and former deacon recently ordained to the gospel ministry, to preach one Sunday each month. Lumpkin agreed, performing this work probably without compensation for an uncertain period of time. The rift with Crawford healed, the church invited him to participate in the ordination of a deacon and opened correspondence with his church at Cassville. At the end of the year, he was again elected pastor.

#### JOHN CRAWFORD, 1839-1840, 1842

Subject to the usual annual call, John Crawford served the church in 1839 and 1840 on the second weekend of each month, preaching about two-thirds of the time. Often he shared the pulpit with invited guests, resulting in two or three sermons on some Sundays. Apparently Crawford's situation in Cassville forbade his continuation in office, and John Lewis of Cass County was elected for 1841. When he declined, the church moved rather aimlessly for a year, meeting only half the time. Elijah Lumpkin, who was still a member of the Rome congregation, preached four months; John Holmes, probably of Cave Spring, preached twice.

The drift was thought to have been halted when Crawford accepted leadership for 1842, but it was not. He is known to have been in Rome on the third weekends of March and April; no conferences were held in six or eight of the months; the other months Lumpkin probably filled the pulpit. The membership of the Rome

*Nonresident Pastors of the Rome Baptist Church,  
1835-1848*



John Crawford  
1837, 1839-1840,  
1842



Humphrey Posey  
1843-1844



Edwin Dyer  
1847-1848

Portraits are not available for Hugh Quinn (1835-1836),  
William Wood (1838), and James H. B. Shackelford (1845-1846).

church— probably never more than 30— declined to a low of 22 in 1842 and slid to 17 the following year while the new pastor was trying to reestablish vigor. It is not known where services were held; the homeless congregation's building program was completely stalled. Crawford's commitments in and near Cassville doubtlessly increasing, he was not recalled for 1843. He remained in Cass/Bar-tow County as an esteemed and able leader until his death in 1873.

#### HUMPHREY POSEY, 1843-1844

Already a widely known man in his early sixties, Humphrey Posey was the Rome pastor for 1843 and 1844. Earlier he had been a teacher and a missionary preacher and educator among the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina and northwest Georgia. About 1826 he moved to Walker County, where he was pastor of several churches and, from 1843 to 1845, a missionary for the area employed by the Georgia Baptist Convention. Traveling to Rome the weekend of each second Sunday from his home near LaFayette, he saw the church reverse its downward trend in membership and resume its drive to construct a meetinghouse. For the last six months of 1844, he was himself a member of the Rome church. A widower, Posey married Mrs. Jane Stokes in July 1844 and moved to her home in Newnan. Thereafter he preached in Rome only two more times. After his death in 1846 he was the subject of a 103-page published biography which does not mention Rome.

#### JAMES H. B. SHACKELFORD, 1845-1846

The next pastor was James H. B. Shackelford of Cassville, who led the church in 1845 and 1846. Apparently a native of Albany, Georgia, he had moved to Cherokee Georgia just a year or two before being called to Rome. Then probably in his late twenties, he came to town for about two-thirds of his second Sunday appointments. Almost certainly the first building was erected during this time, and the membership reached a new high of 41. Soon to become the wealthiest and in many ways the most influential lay leaders in the church, Alfred and Martha Shorter transferred their letters during this period. Shackelford was reelected for a third year, but found it necessary to refuse. Until 1864 he stayed in the Cassville-Calhoun area, preaching and pursuing various other occupations. At one time he was proprietor of the Calhoun Hotel! With the threat of invasion by Northern troops, he returned to south Georgia, preaching and farming for twenty years near Albany and

in Lee County. His last ten years were spent near Cumming, where evidently he died in 1892.

#### EDWIN DYER, 1847-1848

Proving to be the last nonresident pastor before the Civil War, Edwin Dyer served a two-year period in the Rome pulpit. Respected throughout the state of Georgia, this forty-one-year-old minister had led the church in Monroe and, since 1840, the LaFayette and other nearby Baptist churches. Making the thirty-five-mile trip from his Walker County home almost every third weekend during his tenure, he conducted a ministry marked by four significant events. The first known public offering for missions was taken on Sunday, September 22, 1847—the \$7.40 received was divided equally between domestic and Indian mission causes. Later that fall a revival initiated a time of growth when the membership increased from 39 to 61. A Sunday school for children was started in 1848. That April the church took steps to secure a resident pastor that culminated in success by the end of the year. Dyer continued his preaching in Walker and Chattooga counties until about 1864. He escaped the approaching enemy by moving first to Arkansas and later to Texas, probably serving churches in both states.

#### *THREE RESIDENT PASTORS*

#### CHARLES H. STILLWELL, 1849-1855

A momentous decision was reached at a conference on April 15, 1848: "On Motion—It was agreed, that we prepare an address to [the] Georgia Baptist Convention, desiring the aid & assistance of that body in procuring the services of a settled minister amongst us; The Church agreed to meet this day two weeks to take into consideration, the amount to be raised in cooperation with the convention for the purpose of procuring the services of an efficient Minister at this place." A fortnight later the pastor's salary was first mentioned in the minutes: "The Church pledged on her part two hundred & fifty Dollars . . ." Although the Georgia Convention acknowledged the request without taking recorded action on it, this did not permanently dampen their interest. A committee of three was named in September "to correspond with baptist ministers, on the subject of a call to the charge of the Church at Rome"—the first pulpit committee on record. The November conference reflects

their success: "Went into the choice of a Pastor for the year 1849, and Bro. Charles H. Stillwell of Talbotton was unanimously chosen . . . ." Accepting the invitation the next month, he began his ministry in January 1849, and together with his wife joined the church by letter in April.

Born at Savannah in 1806, Charles Harden Stillwell was self-educated. He was baptized in 1827 and ordained to the gospel ministry ten years later. After preaching near Monticello from 1837 until 1840, he moved to Talbot County as the pastor of several churches in that area. For the first year after moving to Rome, 1849, he continued to preach half-time in Talbot County, after which he devoted his full attention to Rome and Floyd County. At no time was he ever full-time pastor of the Rome church. Accepting an annual call, for three years (1849, 1853-1854) he preached one Sunday each month (second or third); for three (1850-1851, 1855), two Sundays (first and third); and for one (1852), three Sundays (first, second, and third). To support his large family, he was pastor at various times also at Friendship, Cave Spring, and Pisgah churches.

Concerning his coming to Rome, Stillwell wrote to the *Christian Index*: "I felt that I was but little sustained by their [the members'] prayers. A worldly spirit pervaded all classes of the community." Attributing this to the railroad and the regular steamboat service in and out of town, "thus opening a highway to market, for thousands of acres of the most fertile lands in Georgia," he observed: "While in worldly view our people have enjoyed advantages, they have also had strong temptation to neglect their spiritual interests." By mid-1850, however, he could write to the *Index*: "I thank God . . . that a goodly number of our brethren and sisters have taken the alarm, and are no longer at ease in Zion."

During his seven-year ministry at Rome, a vast change came over the congregation. Of course his presence in town as a full-time resident would contribute an intensity to his leadership not enjoyed by any of his predecessors. During his first year the membership grew from 61 to 84, soon reaching a high of 140 and averaging over 113 for the period. From 1852 to 1855 the congregation was preoccupied with constructing a new building, and Stillwell participated in its dedication just before his retirement. Mission gifts jumped six-fold over previous years, reaching a high of \$85.06 in 1853 and averaging \$29.89 per year. In 1850 the ladies of the church first formed their own organization—though Mrs. Stillwell doubtless had more to do with this than her husband.

His financial support was a frequent problem for the church. A committee was probably named each year to secure subscriptions

*Resident Pastors of the Rome Baptist Church,  
1849-1863*



Charles H. Stillwell  
1849-1855



Shaler G. Hillyer  
1856-1859



David W. Gwin  
1861-1863

for his salary. In March 1850, according to the minutes, the church "Agreed to make an application to the Southern board [of] Domestic Missions [now the Home Mission Board], for aid in support of a Pastor . . . ." Two months later approval was made known and the pastor's commission received. That December Stillwell was offered \$375 for serving three Sundays each month in 1851, but he continued with only two. Once more, in March 1851, the congregation "Agreed to make application to Southern Board for aid to support of our Pastor," and once again Stillwell was granted a commission. Obviously hoping for a renewal of the board's assistance, the church offered him full-time employment in 1852 at a salary of \$650, but no further commission is mentioned and a three-Sunday-per-month agreement was consummated. In 1853 the church retrenched, but even then fell behind in paying his quarter-time salary. A special committee was appointed to act with the deacons in this matter. On August 9 Stillwell "handed in his resignation as Pastor which was received . . . ." A pulpit committee was named immediately, searching throughout the rest of the year while Stillwell remained in the pulpit. The ministerial crisis was concluded in December when he accepted a unanimous call as quarter-time pastor for \$300. The financial crisis was not concluded, however, and in September 1854 Stillwell thought it necessary to address a communication requesting the balance of his 1853 salary. Probably a combination of monetary uncertainty and poor health prompted him to speak in December 1854 of ending his pastorate after six years, but he was prevailed upon to serve half-time in 1855 for \$400. By November of that year his 1853 and 1854 salary had been paid in full and a committee was diligently working on the current balance, which presumably was soon liquidated.

Meantime, Stillwell was writing in the *Index* of "palsy of the face" which had afflicted him during the summer and fall of 1855, rendering him almost incapable of reading. In September his successor was selected for 1856, though he preached for the rest of the year.

With a brief interval in 1865, Stillwell lived in Rome until his death in 1887. During those thirty years he spoke with frequency in Rome and elsewhere, serving as pastor of several smaller churches. In 1860 he believed that Dr. R. W. January of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, had cured him of cancer with a vegetable compound and allowed his name—along with J. R. Graves and others—to be used in newspaper advertisements placed by the doctor! Active in several secular ventures, Stillwell was superintendent and cashier of the Rome Railroad and clerk of the board of commissioners of roads and

revenues, resigning the latter rather than sign a license legalizing the sale of alcoholic beverages. In the seventies he was a missionary in northwest Georgia under the Home Mission Board or the Georgia Baptist Convention. After his death a tribute by his successor was published that bears repeating: "His membership remained with the church which he had so long served. This gave me an opportunity to know him intimately. I learned to love him, and I think I loved him with a feeling that was different from any mere human affection. I loved him because I could see Jesus in him. He was not a rich or learned man, and yet the 'bright and morning star' shined through his life with its mild splendor upon the moral darkness around him. If such a thing be possible here on earth, he was one who had already washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

#### SHALER G. HILLYER, 1856-1859

The pastor from 1856 to 1859 was Shaler Granby Hillyer. A native of Wilkes County, Georgia, where he was born in 1809, he was the first Rome Baptist pastor known to have a college education, being graduated from the University of Georgia in 1829. After flirting with the legal profession for a while—he was admitted to the bar in 1831—he decided upon a life of teaching and preaching. Baptized in 1831 and ordained to the gospel ministry four years later, he became pastor of numerous churches, including those at Athens, Milledgeville, Macon, Madison, and White Plains. His educational posts included the professorship of belles-lettres at Mercer University from 1847 to 1856. Frequently in attendance at the Georgia Baptist Convention, he was an exceedingly influential figure in state denominational affairs, holding an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Mercer. Resigning because of dissension in the Mercer faculty, Hillyer came to Rome with his wife, ten children, and about twenty slaves. He bought a farm three miles from town on the Oostanula River, naming it Lindisfarn and employing an overseer to supervise its operation. At times Hillyer seems to have preached each Sunday, including a service in the afternoon, and at other times only on the third Sunday. A \$200 debt was owed on his salary in 1857; when the church offered \$800 for 1858 ("or the amt for which our pews may rent if over that sum," added the minutes) part of the deficit was still outstanding. In February of 1857 Hillyer opened a girls' high school in the lecture room of the Baptist church with the approval of the congregation. Soon all the available space in his home was filled with young ladies coming from a dis-

tance, while he received as day students both girls and boys. The length of time that this school remained in operation is not known. Under Hillyer's leadership the congregation grew to 128 in 1857, probably increased even more in 1858, and then leveled off in 1859—due doubtless to Hillyer's preoccupation with the poor health of his extensive family. When the faculty problem was resolved at Mercer and he was invited back as professor of theology, he left Rome in September of 1859 with resolutions from the church commending his "fervent piety" and his "capacity & untiring zeal."

Thereafter he taught at Mercer until the war forced suspension of classes, at Cave Spring during the early years of the war, and at Monroe Female (now Tift) College from 1867 to 1881. For five of these years he was also president of the institution. Major pastorates were held in Forsyth and Washington, Georgia, with numerous brief ones elsewhere. After his virtual retirement in 1887 he wrote a book entitled *Manual of Bible Morality* and many essays for the *Christian Index* that were posthumously collected in a volume called *Reminiscences of Georgia Baptists*. His death occurred in 1900.

#### NO PASTOR, 1859-1861

The Rome church experienced extraordinary difficulty in securing a replacement for Hillyer. Thomas Rambaut, president of the Cherokee Baptist College in Cassville, and Charles H. Stillwell were employed to preach two Sundays each month—but Stillwell bore the greater burden. J. E. Ryerson, a traveling evangelist, was called as pastor in May 1860, led a notable revival that added 51 members the next month, was adjudged by the church innocent of charges of intoxication, and pleaded "broken health" as his reason for declining the pulpit. In October 1860 Rambaut was formally called, but refused without delay. The church next invited a man referred to simply as "Brother Childs" (perhaps J. M. Chiles of Mitchell County, Georgia) "to visit us"—but nothing came of it. An Atlanta Baptist newspaper, but not the church minutes, records the call of R. J. Wilson of Beaufort, South Carolina, in January 1861. After he did not come, the congregation attempted for six months to convince A. D. Sears that he should be their pastor, but he elected to remain in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. At long last, in July 1861, a committee was appointed to investigate the man who would next fill the Rome pulpit.

## DAVID W. GWIN, 1861-1863

From October 1, 1861, through December 31, 1863, David William Gwin was the last pastor to lead the Rome Baptist Church during the first three decades of its life. Not quite twenty-three years of age when he arrived in Rome, Gwin was a native Virginian, born in 1838. Graduating from Richmond College in 1859, he then studied law and taught school. Early in 1861 he moved to LaGrange, Georgia, as professor of ancient languages in Brownwood Institute. Seven years before, he had been baptized by the First Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia, and had over the intervening years contemplated the ministry as his life's work. When the Rome invitation was extended, he was still so uncertain that he asked for and received a probationary six-month call. The Rome church ordained him to the gospel ministry on November 3, 1861—the only time that the church has ordained its own pastor. When the trial period was past, Gwin was requested "to act as pastor indefinitely" at a salary of \$600 per annum, thus becoming the first man not subject to an annual call. He preached twice each Sunday, at a salary that finally became \$800. In a report to the church dated December 19, 1862, Gwin declared himself on the topic of ministerial salaries. "I think every church should give its pastor what it is able irrespective of his condition or his liabilities . . . . This duty [to support the pastor] rests upon every member and it should be voluntary. It should not be obtained by coercion or by assessment upon pews. I therefore announce it as my preference not to receive a fixed salary, nor receive any if it be regarded as coming from the renting of the pews." The church had been raising money in this fashion for six years; the practice was apparently halted until after the close of the war.

During his twenty-seven-month ministry, he devoted himself to his congregation and community, writing to the *Christian Index*: "It has been my custom to meet the anxious enquirers every Monday afternoon in the main audience room of the church . . . . This is a more pleasant way to work than by religious 'excitements.'" After an initial period of spiritual dryness, Gwin reported thirty baptisms in the eleven months from March 1862 to January 1863. Regrettably no reliable membership figures have been preserved between 1857 and 1865. In the former year the church had 84 whites (and 44 blacks lost before the close of the war); in the latter, 121 whites. Probably the white membership peaked at about 150 because of the 1860 Ryerson revival, after which it slowly diminished. The minutes do suggest that during the Gwin years the church ac-

tually lost a few more than it gained. In addition, the church retired a large debt in 1861-1862, paid the pastor's salary and a small bonus regularly each quarter, and contributed more to the Coosa Association than ever before—although the absence of records prevents the determination of amount. Of course Gwin's years in Rome coincided with part of the Civil War, and much more will be said later in that connection.

"A Bit of Romance" concerning Gwin occurred as he married Miss Jennie C. Howell on October 13, 1863. The *Index* article declared that for six years the two had been engaged, starting when he was a student at Richmond College and she was living at the home of her father, Robert B. C. Howell, pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Richmond. He and his family returned to Nashville in 1857, where for the second time he became pastor of the First Baptist Church. After that city fell to the Union army in 1862, Gwin urged his betrothed to come to Rome, "even if she had to declare herself an 'alien enemy,' to be enabled to do so. But this was not necessary. The Yankee General granted a pass to several Southern ladies, and she was among the number." They were married near Rome by J. F. Swanson, a Floyd County minister. Shortly thereafter Federal troops threatened northwest Georgia, and partly to protect his new bride Gwin resigned his pastorate effective December 31.

Moving to the safety of Griffin, Georgia, he was pastor and high school teacher there until 1868. Later he led the First Baptist churches of Montgomery, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia, for eight years each. Smaller pulpits and a decade of retirement followed, being concluded by his death in Virginia in 1920.

## LAY LEADERS

### CLERKS

Six men served as clerk of the church during the period before the war: Thomas H. Cliett (1835-1836), Wesley Shropshire (1836-1840), Samuel Johnson (1841-1847), Absalom E. Reeves (1847-1848), A. B. Ross (1848-1862), and Charles E. Hills (1862-1865). An assistant clerk was mentioned in 1839, but this office was not continued. In the absence of the regularly elected official, a clerk pro tem signed the minutes on occasion. Usually the clerk was named by the church only as a vacancy appeared, but beginning in 1862 he was elected each December, along with other church officers. In November 1851 Ross was "authorized to purchase a record book for

the Church, and transcribe the records of the Church in a plain and legible manner." Within a month this task was completed in seventy manuscript pages; thereafter, the handwriting changed as the clerk changed. The minutes, which remain to the present, are in a leather-bound volume with about three hundred pages approximately eight by thirteen inches in size. This book, marked "Record Baptist Church" on the spine, covers minutes and membership rolls through August 28, 1870, and has been microfilmed for the sake of safety.

## DEACONS

For almost two years the church had only two officers, the moderator (usually the pastor) and the clerk. This situation was rectified on April 8, 1837, when Elijah R. Lumpkin and Thomas W. Burton were elected by the church, examined by a presbytery consisting of John Crawford and Evan Pearson, pastors from Cass County, and "set apart as deacons." In addition to the examination, such an ordination service would involve a charge by one member of the presbytery and "the right of fellowship" by another member, after which the candidate would be pronounced a deacon. Not until 1851 did the minutes specifically mention the "imposition of hands by the presbytery," but doubtless this was done from the beginning.

Over the years, fifteen men were selected by the church to be deacons. Two of these transferred membership as deacons from other churches and, in each case, were requested by the Rome church to serve without further action. When Alfred Shorter was elected, he asked not to be ordained and the church honored his request. The other twelve had been members of the church an average of slightly less than two years when selected. The average term of service was about four and a half years, ranging all the way from five months for one who died in office to fourteen years for A. B. Ross, who was still active in 1865. One man ceased to be a deacon when ordained as a minister, and another was excluded for "distilling and engaging in the traffic of ardent Spirits."

At various times the church minutes provide an insight into the specific duties of the deacons. Thus, they were occasionally a committee to investigate disciplinary matters, to help the poor of the community, to search for a pastor, to make assessments for the church's contingency fund, and to rent pews in order to provide income for the church.

The names of the deacons and their years of service

follow: Elijah R. Lumpkin (1837), Thomas W. Burton (1837-1841), Job Rogers (1838, 1844-1850), Rowland Cobb (1838-1839), Jerman Carter (1850-before 1865), James H. Kervine (1851-1854), A. B. Ross (1851-1866), Alfred B. Reece (?-1853), William H. Holder (1857-1864), John F. Cooper (1859-1861), John H. McClung (1859-1864), W. F. Ayer (1860-1865), G. B. T. Moore (1860-1861), Charles E. Hills (1860-1881, 1883-1885).

## TRUSTEES

The church was incorporated by the state legislature on December 25, 1837, with the following men as trustees, the legal representatives of the corporation: Wesley Shropshire, Elijah R. Lumpkin, Job Rogers, Thomas W. Burton, and Alfred B. Reece. As these men left the fellowship, they were replaced by others, with a total of fifteen acting in this capacity through 1865. The average period of service as a trustee was almost six years, although Reece was active for almost sixteen.

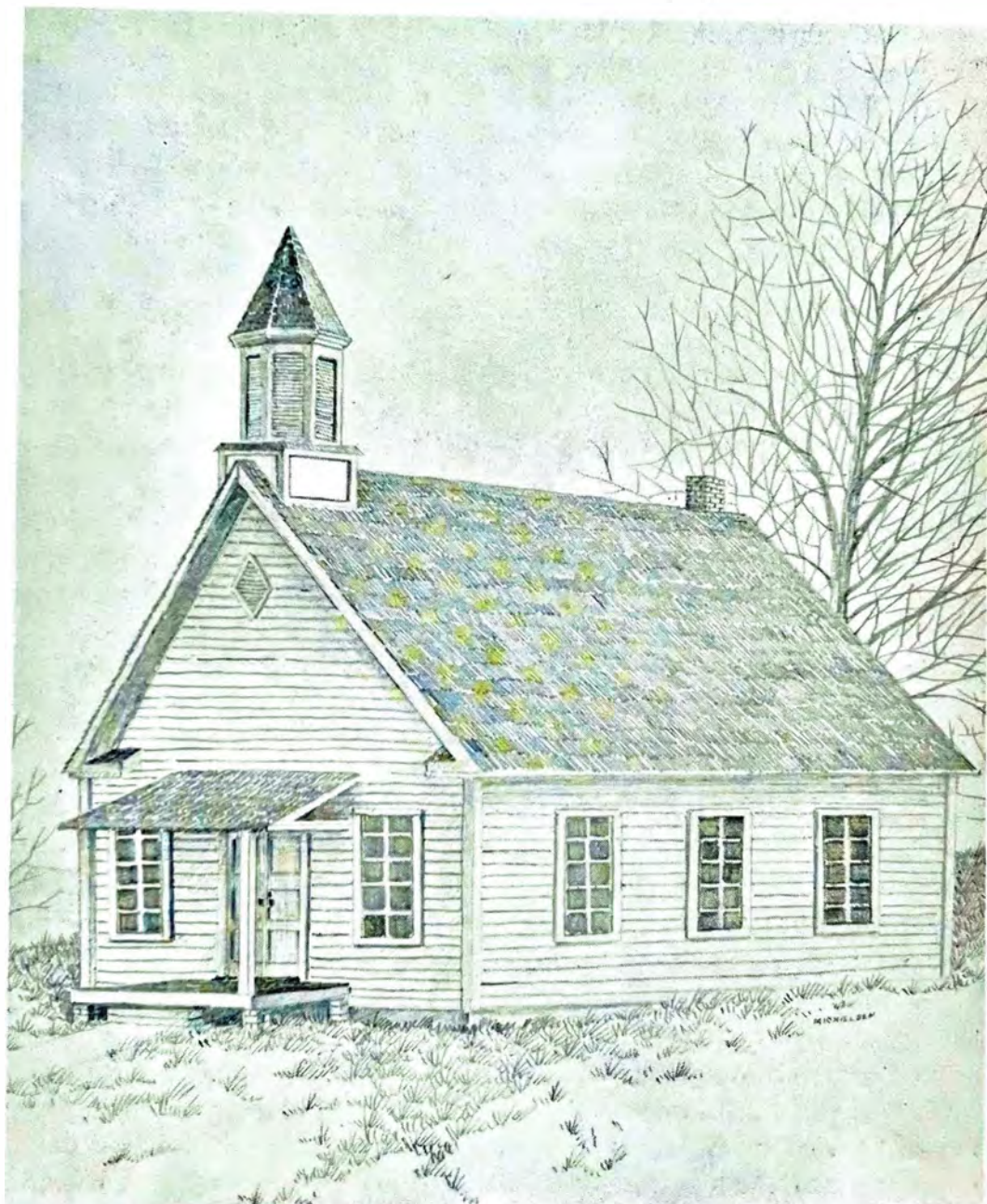
The names of the trustees and their years of service follow: Wesley Shropshire (1837-1843), Elijah R. Lumpkin (1837-1845), Job Rogers (1837-1838, 1844-1850), Thomas W. Burton (1837-1841), Alfred B. Reece (1837-1853), Absalom E. Reeves (1852-1857), Alfred Shorter (1852-1882), Henry Harris (1852-1854), Stephen B. Pearce (1852-1856), James H. Kervine (1853-1854), William B. Jones (1853-1856), John G. McKenzie (1854-1856), Charles H. Stillwell (1856-1887), Cunningham M. Pennington (1856-1885), Hollis Cooley (1856-1857).

## THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

An executive committee was activated in 1861, composed of Pastor D. W. Gwin, the deacons, and two others, Charles H. Stillwell and Alfred Shorter. A year later C. O. Stillwell was elected in Shorter's stead. Their authority was "to act in all cases heretofore deputed to the Deacons." The minutes reveal that the committee prepared "a manual for the government of our church" and leveled charges against at least five men that resulted in three exclusions.

## *LOTS AND BUILDINGS*

For a full decade, the Rome Baptist Church owned no meeting-house. Although the congregation used the Academy building on Lumpkin Street (now West Eighth Avenue) in early 1840, usually the location of its services is not known.



The first building of the Rome Baptist Church, erected about 1845, looked much like this sketch by Jim Michielsen.

Indeed, for two years the congregation had no building site. Then on June 10, 1837, a committee was appointed "to make application to the Inferior Court of Floyd County, for titles to a lot in the Town of Rome, which has been given to this church by the Court and Company [County?]." Now a vacant lot, this land was located on the northwest corner of Lumpkin and Green streets (now West Eighth Avenue and West First Street), just off the crest of Lumpkin Hill—the one of Rome's famous seven no longer existing. It was thought unnecessary to record the acquisition of this property in the courthouse at that time.

After an extended delay, on December 7, 1839, a committee of three was named "to take up subscriptions for raising funds for the purpose of building a house of worship . . . ." Two more men were added the following March, but the entire committee soon ceased to function. In June 1841 another committee was provided "to take up subscriptions, and draw a plan for the building of a Baptist Church at Rome . . . ." Two of the five men on the committee were not even members of the Rome Baptist Church! Three more years passed before the building program again appears in the minutes. In June of 1844 the following resolution was adopted: "Resolved: That whereas the Baptist Church at Rome are desirous of building a house for Public Worship and are called upon by the Community for an expression of their views upon the subject of the Institutions of the day, before contributing to the erection of the church building; and they now make known to all whom it concerns; that we are not disposed to make that Subject a test of fellowship, but feel that it is the privilege of each member to enjoy his or her sentiments on the subject and act in accordance therewith . . . ." This action indicates the strength in Floyd County of the Primitive or Old School Baptist movement that stood so firmly against what they called the "Institutions of the day"—missionary, tract, Bible, educational, and temperance societies. That the church was willing to equivocate at that point suggests also the presence of antimissionary Baptists within its membership.

Sometime between June 1844 and December 1847 a wooden building was erected. Regardless of how pleased the people were to have it, the minutes breathe not a word concerning it until the latter date when repairs were needed. Details concerning its construction and cost are entirely absent. No contemporary sketch or lengthy verbal description of it exists. Scattered references in the minutes reveal that eventually it had a bell, a partition down the center of the sanctuary to separate the males from the females, another partition across the back to separate the whites from the



The second building of the Rome Baptist Church, erected in 1855, looked much like this sketch by Jim Michielsen.

blacks, stoves, and "a platform [porch] before the church house door."

Perhaps a new Methodist edifice erected in 1852 and the gradual growth of the Baptist congregation to about one hundred members combined to produce a resolution adopted on April 10, 1852: "That we will build a new church house when able to do so. . . ." Committees to secure property and raise funds were appointed. Several lots were investigated, and one on the corner of Broad and Etowah (now West Sixth Avenue) streets—a site now occupied by the J. L. Todd Auction Company—was purchased in December 1852 for \$200. Proving unsatisfactory, it was sold five months later at a profit of \$600! In April 1853 a part of the present property on the corner of Oostanaula and Court streets (now East Fourth Avenue and East First Street) was bought for \$800, most of which was contributed by the women of the church. By November 12, 1853, the first lot and frame building had been sold for \$600, although the deed was dated a year later and not recorded for another decade! The congregation secured permission from the inferior court to worship in the courthouse at Court and Bridge streets (now East First Street and East Fifth Avenue), the church furniture was moved to that location, and for at least a year services were held there and in the Methodist church.

In the meanwhile, another building committee was named by secret ballot on April 17, 1853. "On counting the votes, brother A. Shorter was elected" as the only member. Under his supervision construction was initiated soon enough for Pastor Charles H. Stillwell to report in the *Christian Index* on July 23, 1854: "I trust . . . that by the first of December we shall be able to use the basement rooms of our new house of worship, now in process of erection." By April of 1855 construction had advanced to the stage that a proposal was made for erecting a town clock in the "Cupello." While suitable arrangements with the mayor and city council could not be made, this did not keep the lofty spire from climbing ever higher. Throughout these months, Shorter was making use of funds raised by the committee named in 1852—and supplementing these with his own gifts. Hence, at a conference for men only held on August 31, 1855, two were named to confer with Shorter about his expenditures and the group made plans for dedicating the building.

The first service in the new house of worship occurred on October 21, 1855. The preacher was Shaler G. Hillyer, recent professor at Mercer University and next pastor of the Rome Baptist Church. Other ministers present included T.U. Wilkes of Atlanta and W.D.

Cowdry of Cave Spring. The choir of the Cave Spring church probably also participated in the ceremony.

Constructed of brick, the building was forty by seventy-two feet in overall dimensions, with walls thirty-six feet high and "a beautiful spire, 110 feet high, from the ground." The description, probably by Stillwell, continued: "The audience room is 37 by 60 feet, finished to the rafters, without a ceiling, which gives it an elevation of about 36 feet from the floor. Below is an ample basement. The house is furnished in Byzantine style, and has a tasteful and appropriate appearance." Within a year the women of the church gave a thousand-pound bell, a chandelier, pulpit lamps, carpets, a communion service, a sofa for use behind the pulpit, and a harmonium (reed organ)—the whole costing about \$750. Two pictures of the building remain, an 1856 sketch and an 1864 photograph. Unfortunately only the rear of the structure shows, since both pictures were made from the vantage point of Myrtle Hill.

The cost of the church and its furnishings was reported by Stillwell and Hillyer to be approximately eight thousand dollars. Of this, it was said that Shorter himself furnished three-fourths to four-fifths. When a final settlement was made with him during the summer of 1856, the minutes include a set of figures that are manifestly incomplete. Shorter made "a full exhibit" of his accounts, but unfortunately the details have been omitted. The remaining evidence suggests that, at the end, he gave about fifteen hundred dollars—but his earlier, and more generous, gifts are nowhere a part of the record.

Additions and improvements were made to the building and property. In 1856 a stone fence was erected around the grounds and stoves were placed in "the assembly room"—presumably the sanctuary where worshipers had brought their own portable heaters during the previous winter. Apparently the stone fence was far more elaborate than the congregation had desired, a controversy with its builder ensued, he was required to remove it, and a temporary fence was constructed in its stead. The same man was later involved in a disagreement over plastering in the church basement; this was resolved by arbitration. When gas was installed in Rome early in 1860, the church promptly added this improved form of illumination to its building, subsequently paying for pipes, fixtures and burners, and the gas consumed.

For thirteen years the congregation existed without employing a janitor; thereafter he or she was a perennial problem. The deacons were directed in 1848 to contract with somebody to open and close

the building, keep it in order, and ring the bell at 10 and 10:45 for the 11 o'clock service. The amount of compensation was first mentioned three years later—\$12 per year. Soon it became \$15, then \$25, and by 1862 had risen to \$75 annually.

The congregation did not furnish a parsonage to its three resident ministers. Stillwell probably rented a home—perhaps the one described as his residence on the corner of Franklin Street and Maiden Lane (now East Second Street and East Third Avenue) which he purchased in 1863 from Alfred Shorter. Hillyer owned his own plantation, as has been observed. Unmarried during most of his pastorate, Gwin probably rented a room with a church family.

### *CHURCH SERVICES AND CONFERENCES*

Until 1850, services of worship and a conference were regularly held monthly. Services were scheduled for Saturday morning, followed by a church conference. The next morning another service came, followed by another conference if needed for the reception of new members. Either the second or third Sunday was utilized, apparently being changed to suit the convenience of the pastor.

In 1850 and 1851 under the leadership of Charles H. Stillwell, services were held two Sundays each month, the first and third. Thereafter services came once, twice, or three times monthly until D. W. Gwin was called as pastor. He reported to the church late in 1862: "Preaching has with few exceptions been regular, every Sab. I have preached about 110 Sermons to the whites [in about fourteen months]. . . ."

Sunday evening services were seldom—if ever—held regularly for the whites. After 1850 the black portion of the congregation almost surely conducted their services at night, assembling in the basement of the new building following its occupancy in 1855.

Services of worship included preaching, prayer, the reading of Scripture, and singing—although no order of service has been found from the antebellum period. It was customary to kneel during the prayers and sit during the singing. Hymn-singing was evidently done at first from memory or by having the words repeated by a leader in easily remembered phrases. Perhaps some members brought their own hymnals, since such a practice was not uncommon. In 1851 a committee was named "to raise Money to pay for the Hymn Books," but the outcome of this action is unknown. Twelve years later another committee was instructed to investigate the propriety of purchasing hymnals for the church. After a four-month interval in the minutes, this inconclusive result was recorded: "The

Committee on Hymn Books reported. None of the 'Psalmody' to be had but could obtain copies of the 'Psalmist' @ 1.75¢ each. On motion it was ordered the committee be continued and instructed to procure a supply of the 'Psalmist' if requisite funds could be raised." The unavailable *Baptist Psalmody* had been published in 1850 by the Southern Baptist Publication Society. The American Baptist Publication Society's *Psalmist* had first appeared in a Southern edition in 1847, thereafter becoming widely popular in that area of the country. In fact, no hymnals were bought until 1866, since the money had not been raised in 1863 and the war forced the church's closing five months later.

Instrumental accompaniment was unknown in the Rome church until 1856 when, at a cost of \$117.19, the ladies bought a harmonium (reed organ). The minutes include this comment: "The ladies of the Church having purchased a musical instrument presented the same to the Church, which was accepted by the Church, and a vote of thanks, tendered to the donors: On motion it was agreed to place the instrument in the Gallery." Although such instruments were still relatively unfamiliar in northwest Georgia, only two members who "formerly held their membership in the country" withdrew from the church, "as they were conscientiously opposed to the 'Organ' . . . and felt that they could not, with any degree of consistency, fellowship it."

A regular Wednesday night prayer meeting would hardly have been expected prior to the coming of Stillwell, and usually none was held. Starting in August 1850, it is probable that mid-week prayer services became a familiar part of church life. While the new building was being constructed in the early fifties, such meetings were held "at the houses of the brethren of the church . . ." In 1856 the church "agreed to continue Weekly prayer meetings, by a unanimous vote of the conference." Pastor Gwin reported in December 1862: "The Prayer Meetings have been tolerably well attended. It has been my custom to deliver a lecture—for the most part of the year from the gospel according to John. Our greatest desideratum is to get the male members to pray in public. This is their evident duty."

Referred to only once in an 1860 Rome newspaper, a young men's prayer meeting was to be held every Monday night at the Baptist church. The minutes ignore these services, and perhaps they did not even occur.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper were the two ordinances observed by the church. The June 1837 decorum declared: "True believers in Christ Jesus are the only subjects of Baptism, and . . . im-

mersion is the Mode." Since the buildings had no inside, heated pools, persons were baptized in the Oostanaula River—perhaps always at a site once called "Flat Rock," the location of which was so familiar that no one ever bothered to describe it. Sunday at eight in the morning seems to have been a favorite time. A few hardy souls are known to have been immersed during the winter months, but this was not the general practice.

Closed communion, administered only by "orderly Baptist Ministers, who have been regularly ordained," was the custom of the church. Its June 1837 decorum insisted: "None but regularly baptised Church members have a right to commune at the Lord's Supper." In the absence of Pastor Crawford, the deacons served the Lord's Supper to non-Baptists in August of 1837. This upset the pastor, who was absent from the next conference, September 9, 1837, when a resolution was passed to prevent a recurrence: "Resolved, that in as much, as at our last Conference an unfortunate misunderstanding between our Minister and Deacons, there was a departure from our faith & *purpose of practice* in permitting members of another denomination to commune with us: & that in future endeavour to avoid a similar occurrence." The 1844 decorum included as its ninth article these words: "It shall be the duty of all members to attend communion [conference] and partake of the Lord's Supper. Any member neglecting either: shall render his or her reasons to the Deacons, previous to the next communion." During that period, the ordinance was observed quarterly. Under Pastor Gwin a change was made on December 13, 1861: "Adopted also that the Communion day of this church be made Monthly from this time forward and that the third Sabbath of each month be selected as the day for the administration of that ordinance." The following spring an effort was made by some to reconsider this action, but it was lost by postponement.

Practiced by all Primitive and some non-Primitive Baptists, foot-washing became a topic of debate in June 1845 when a motion was made to adopt the custom. The minutes report, "After Some discussion and the question the motion was overruled," and the subject was never again made a part of the record.

Special days were almost never referred to before the war. In November 1856, "on motion it was agreed to observe Thanksgiving Day in accordance with the recommendation of the Governor of the State." Apart from this, the extant records are completely silent. Christmas and Easter were completely ignored, and no other Thanksgiving is mentioned.

Regular church conferences were held, usually on Saturday

morning before the second or third Sunday in each month. In 1861 this was changed to the Friday evening before the third Sabbath, being made feasible by the recent introduction of gas illumination in the church building. Special conferences were called at other times, and especially on Wednesday evening after prayer meeting. Occasionally a regular conference was postponed—because of “the inclemency of the weather,” poor attendance, or a conflicting associational meeting. Even more rarely a conference would be convened, only to discover that no business was on the agenda to be transacted.

With the pastor as the moderator (although local lay members or visiting clergymen were sometimes appointed in his absence), the conference followed a carefully defined pattern. Visiting Baptist ministers were requested to participate in the proceedings. The doors of the church were opened for new members. Disciplinary action was taken, when necessary. Any other matter “which interests the Church” was considered. This latter category—which frequently consumed the lion’s share of time—involved financial matters, the construction or repair of the meetinghouse, the election of officers, and the naming of delegates to associational sessions. In the early years, inquiries were at times made concerning harmony within the membership. When the moderator heard such a question, he halted the business session and allowed anyone present to voice his or her grievances. None was ever heard, according to the record, and he then declared the church to be “in fellowship” or “in peace.”

In addition to the pastor and other ordained ministers belonging to the church, the Rome congregation heard many visiting preachers. Indeed, as has been observed, the pastor often invited other men to participate in the service, sometimes several on one day. If a traveling preacher were discovered to be in the locality, he might be asked to deliver a sermon—even if the pastor were also present. In this case, a short intermission or a meal might separate the two sermons, but it was not at all unusual to hear two men without any recess at all.

Numerous persons occupied the Rome pulpit as visitors, some of whom are not mentioned elsewhere in this essay: J. L. Brooks, J. H. Corley of Eatonton, Henry C. Hornady of Americus, Patrick H. Mell of Athens, and Charles Thompson of Rome. Two men came as representatives of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond: James B. Taylor, corresponding secretary, and D. G. Daniel, agent. The traveling agent for the (Biblè) Revision Association, W. T. Russell, spoke once.

## MEMBERSHIP

Over a period of thirty years, at least 564 persons were associated with the Rome Baptist Church, 436 whites and 128 blacks. Because 32 persons united with the church more than once, the total accessions were 598—166 by baptism, 323 by transfer of church letter, 10 by watchcare, 3 by restoration, 1 by statement, and 95 by ways not indicated. A total of 477 losses were recorded—286 by letter, 43 by excommunication or being dropped, 34 by death, 89 by ways not indicated, and 25 by the departure of blacks during the war.

It is impossible to determine the exact number of members during each year. The clerk often failed to note losses, resulting in inflated figures when his record is taken at face value. Contemporary figures furnished by him for fifteen of the years have been preserved, usually in the minutes of the Coosa Baptist Association. These reliable statistics indicate that the church grew slowly from 8 in 1835 (6 whites, 2 blacks) to 140 in 1851 (no racial breakdown given). The last year known with assurance, 1857, shows 128 members (84 whites, 44 blacks). Making due allowance for the clerk's errors, undoubtedly the largest membership was reached after the revival of 1860, when an estimated 233 were affiliated with the church. The number gradually diminished the following years; in 1865 the revised roll prepared by the clerk showed 121 whites (43 men and 78 women) and no blacks.

Membership in the Rome Baptist Church increased about three times faster than the population of Floyd County, the only local comparison that can be made during this period. The population increase in the county from 1840 to 1860 was 242 percent, while the membership increase in the church was a huge 763 percent. Broken down by decades, from 1840 to 1850 Floyd County grew from 4,441 to 8,205, about 85 percent, while the Rome church grew from an estimated 27 to 118, about 337 percent. From 1850 to 1860 the county grew to 15,195, about 85 percent, while the church grew to an estimated 233, about 97 percent. The rate of growth in the church appreciably diminished in the second decade, but it was still significantly larger than that in the county.

Sometimes it was difficult, or impossible, to join the Rome church. Reportedly excommunicated by a nearby church, one man was investigated carefully over a period of four months before being accepted by letter. When a single lady sought admission upon her statement that she had once belonged to a Baptist church, the

case was postponed for further consideration. Eventually she came under the watchcare of the church. Another lady, "an entire stranger" according to the minutes, sought to join, but "her relation of hope [was] not sufficiently clear . . . ." A committee of female members consulted with her over a period of four months, turning in a negative report. A third lady wished to unite upon her statement, an investigating committee was named, and she was placed on watchcare. Two years later she became a full member upon receipt of her church letter. A white male was accepted for baptism, but before the rite could be administered the church discovered that he had been guilty of lying and deserting his wife and therefore refused his admission. Of course all who sought restoration after being excommunicated by the Rome church were required to voice public and heartfelt repentance.

In addition to several of the pastors, nine licensed or ordained ministers held membership in the Rome church: Thomas H. Cliett (1835-1836), Andrew A. Cobb (1839-1842), William C. Hendricks (1850-1852, licensed), Plumer W. Lamkin (1858-about 1864), Elijah R. Lumpkin (1836-about 1845), William R. Steely (1850), William C. Witt (1851, licensed), Evan B. Wood (1862-1863), Augustus R. Wright (1856-1864). Of these, Lumpkin had previously been ordained by the church as a deacon and, on December 9, 1837, was ordained to the gospel ministry. Hendricks joined the church by letter, being recognized as a licentiate when it was found that his letter contained information to that effect. A medical doctor, Wood conducted special services for the poor in the old Presbyterian church each Sunday afternoon at least during November and December of 1862. Advertisements in the Rome papers announced that all seats would be free and that stoves would make the building as comfortable as possible. Added one editor: "Let it be said that 'the poor have the Gospel preached to them' even in Rome."

Somewhat unusual actions were occasionally taken relating to various of the members. Resolutions were passed praising the abilities of a lady member moving to Montgomery, Alabama, where she opened a school. Later, when a young lady became a student at Mary Sharp College, the Rome congregation wrote a letter placing her under the watchcare of the Winchester, Tennessee, Baptist Church. In 1852 the first deaths to be recorded in the minutes were accompanied by the affirmation: "We should [not] mourn as those who have no hope, believing that our loss is their Eternal gain." Similar resolutions were passed in 1857 and 1861, the only others to be found.

## REVIVALS

Revivals were a part of church life from the beginning, even though the first one or two were only alluded to in the minutes. A resolution was passed in 1837 that "our next meeting commence on Friday before the second Sabbath in December," but there was no large ingathering. Other revivals were mentioned in 1841 and 1843, again without notable results. Led by Pastor Edwin Dyer, who was "assist[ed] occasionally by Methodist brethren and Brother [J. M. M.] Caldwell of the Presbyterian Church," a revival late in 1847 produced at least fourteen additions.

Agreeing "to lay aside all business and dedicate themselves to God's Service," the church held a protracted meeting in October 1851 with James McDonald of Atlanta as the preacher. He wrote to the *Christian Index* about one of the six who was baptized: "A child but eleven years old, was one of the converts. Her pious mother, at first, doubted the capacity of her child for conversion, but very soon, she convinced us all of the work of the Spirit . . . . When her father learned that his child was converted, he could not be restrained from attributing glory to God, audibly in [the] presence of the congregation."

In the midst of an unsettled situation, Pastor Charles H. Stillwell reported successful evangelistic services to the *Index*. While the new sanctuary was under construction and the congregation was meeting in the courthouse and at the Methodist church, fourteen were received in 1854 as Jesse M. Wood of Cedartown was the guest preacher.

A July 1857 revival resulted in a few transfers of church letter, but this did not compare with the one held the following summer. Thomas Rambaut, president of the Cherokee Baptist College in Cassville, was the guest evangelist; seventeen were baptized and almost as many were received by letter.

Great excitement, described in a Rome newspaper as "a glorious revival," broke out in May 1860 under the preaching of J. E. Ryerson and T. J. Fisher, two traveling evangelists. "At times a whole congregation of Christians and many sinners have been in tears, and the front seats crowded with anxious souls," the paper said. "Christians and sinners have been moved beyond anything which has been realized in Rome for a great while." "An Humble Follower of Jesus" wrote an article for the *Index*, reporting in part: "God has manifested his saving presence in our midst, and not only revived the church which had grown cold and feeble, but more than forty souls have been led . . . into the light . . . ." In the church year end-

ing October 1, 1860, the record reveals that sixty-three persons united with the church—the largest such figure in the prewar period.

Two revivals came as a result of Pastor D. W. Gwin's preaching. He reported late in 1862: "In the fall a series of meetings was held which I trust left the church in a healthier state. One evidence of this is that many conversions have occurred since their close"—a total of seventeen. The following year among the soldiers stationed in Rome another revival took place, to be described in a later section concerning the Civil War.

### *DISCIPLINE*

Disciplining members consumed much time and attention at the Rome Baptist Church conferences. No less than 89 cases were handled in thirty years, involving 52 white men, 6 white women, 5 black men, and 3 black women.

Charges brought before the conferences covered a wide range of topics: fighting, arguments with one's neighbors, quarreling with a sister church member, "drinking too much intoxicating spirits," keeping a liquor store open on Sunday, distilling and engaging in the traffic of "ardent spirits," visiting dram shops and billiard rooms, dancing, "participating in vain trifling amusements," visiting a grocery store with "unsuitable company," attending "fairs, etc.," gambling, joining a Methodist church, profanity, bigamy, fornication, nonattendance at church, contempt for the church, and disreputable conduct while in the Confederate army.

Of these causes for discipline, one was given particular attention by the 1844 decorum: "It shall be the duty of each free male members, to attend the monthly conference, and if any fail to attend, shall render an excuse to the next conference thereafter, and for the second offence shall be admonished by the Moderator, and for the third shall be called for by the Church."

Cases were brought up in a variety of ways. At times the guilty person would initiate the process by asking for forgiveness, which was always granted. More often, a charge would be brought up by another person, by a discipline committee ("a board of helps") appointed in 1853, by the deacons after this group was dissolved in 1860, or by the executive committee.

Cases were resolved in a variety of ways also. Usually the matter would be discussed at a single conference and acted on at once. At times a committee would be appointed to "labor with" the accused person, bringing back its report at a subsequent conference.

Five cases were continued over an extended period of time. One white man was suspected of stealing a black girl and leaving town; he was absolved after six months of investigation. Another was excluded after seven months for excessive absence from church and for a disagreement with another member. An eight-month examination concerning one man's alleged adultery resulted in the dismissal of the case for lack of evidence. A fourth man was too frequently absent from church; his case was continued for nine months before he offered a satisfactory explanation. One other man left town under suspicious circumstances following a business failure, but was granted a letter of dismissal after a fourteen-month inquiry.

Usually a person was brought before the conference only once, but 14 men (11 white and 3 black) appeared from two to six times each. Notable cases included one who belonged to the church for more than fifteen years, was tried six times (usually for absences), and was finally excluded for unresolved difficulties with a neighbor who had been excommunicated from the church five years earlier for profanity and drunkenness. A second was charged four times in seven years with adultery or drunkenness, and was finally voted out at his own request. A third was baptized in 1860, tried twice on unspecified charges, and dismissed late in 1861 for neglecting church duties and disorderly conduct. Another was excluded after four years of membership for profanity, fighting, and showing contempt for the church. Three years later he was restored, only to face discipline for an unspecified charge a year later and to request his letter after being cleared. Two years later he placed his letter back in the Rome church, and was removed eight months later for "general unChristian conduct."

Of the 89 cases, 35 resulted in excommunication (27 white men, 3 white women, 3 black men, 2 black women). In addition, 3 white women were probably excluded in actions not completely recorded by the clerk.

The church passed rules insuring that the power of excommunication would not be carelessly wielded. The decorum of 1844 contained as its tenth article: "All cases in conference shall be decided by a majority of members present, except such, that, touching fellowship, then the unanimous voice of the church shall be required." This was repeated in rule nine of the 1852 decorum and expanded in rule ten: "When on a motion involving fellowship a minority shall appear, such minority shall promptly express their submission, or state their intention to contest the vote. In the event of the latter, the final entry shall not be made, but a committee from the

majority shall be appointed to confer with such minority and report the result at the ensuing conference. And in no case shall the final entry be made until agreement be had or such minority disappear and the vote unanimous." Only one case indicates that this rule was ever invoked, and it involved the excommunication of a long-time member and deacon found guilty of making and selling whiskey.

Until the early fifties, cases involving black members were handled at the regular conference together with all other business. After May 18, 1851, however, the pastor and clerk led separate conferences with the black portion of the church, sometimes reporting back to the white conference. Of the nine cases known to have been disposed of in this fashion—and surely in fourteen years there were others not recorded—only one requires particular attention. Against the advice of the church, one man was living with another's wife. Although she could not be charged by the church because she was not a member, he was accused of adultery and disregarding the church. A resolution was carefully prepared and adopted by the white conference: "I[t] appearing that a difference of opinion prevails among the members of this church, as to the propriety of compelling colored members to observe the same Gospel Rule, as the whites in their marriage relations; now for a settlement of said Rule: be it Resolved, 1st. That according to our Confession of faith, we consider the Scriptures, on this, as on all points a sufficient Rule of faith and practice; 2nd. That in the Scriptures we find no authority by precept or example for changing the ordinance of Christ in the matter of marriage; 3rd. That in all cases, where the union of husband and wife is according to the Gospel, the act of final separation by human authority is contrary to the command of Christ in Matthew 19. Chap. & 6 Verse. 'What therefore, God has joined together, let not man put assunder':— "After some discussion," the slave was excluded from the church.

### *FINANCES*

The church minutes are completely silent about financial matters until 1848, although a means of raising funds certainly had been adopted prior to that time. Probably informal committees solicited contributions from the members and friends of the church, apart from the services of worship which did not include a regular offering until after the war. Three men were named treasurer of the church—A. B. Ross (1848-1855), Alfred Shorter (1856-1862), and C. O. Stillwell (1863-1865). Although a finance committee was set up in 1850, it seems not to have functioned very long. Other such com-

mittees were formed in 1853 and 1854, but in 1857 one man was appointed "collector" and in the next year everybody was encouraged to raise money for the church. Funds for current expenses—building maintenance, the pastor's salary, local charities, and missions—would of course be required. Because the first two received the major portion of attention and were related, they will be treated together.

A "contingency fund" was set up to handle many local expenses—but it was hardly filled to overflowing with \$1.20 in 1848, 45¢ in 1850, \$11 in 1851, and \$7.50 in 1853. A debt owed for repairing the first building was finally settled about 1852, and another for repairing the new one in 1856. By 1857 Shorter had probably advanced money to the fund, giving rise to a motion for "a collection of One hundred Dollars for the purpose of liquidating the arrearages on the contingent expense account, and to defray contingent expenses for the present year." After a disheartening \$9.05 had been raised, the church adopted a motion opposing types of fund-raising probably proposed by some of the discouraged members: "Be it resolved: That we do hereby repudiate and renounce all methods for raising money, for any purpose whatever, by any appeal to chance in any form; Whether by throwing *Dice*, *Drawing Straws*, or *Slips of Paper*, or by any other Method involving Chance: Be it Further, Resolved, that this Church disapproves of all raffles for *Pictures paintings &c.* or any other article of value."

By 1850 separate committees were named to obtain subscriptions for pastoral services and presumably were successful in their efforts. During the fifties and sixties the pastor's salary is sometimes known: \$650 for full-time in 1852; \$300 for quarter-time in 1854; \$400 for half-time in 1855; \$700 for full-time in 1862; at least \$800 for full-time in 1863. However, it is also known that the congregation was sometimes tardy in paying the pastor. Not until November 1855 was Stillwell's full salary for 1853 and 1854 finally remitted. Payments for 1855 and 1856 were at last made early in 1857. Evidently the 1857 salary was a year late in coming. While the church was without a regular pastor from 1859 to 1861, Stillwell again filled the pulpit—receiving his last payment in mid-1862.

That the customary, informal approach to stewardship was inefficient came to be recognized in 1857, and a definite plan of attack was adopted. At the June conference each year, it was proposed, money matters would be discussed and a budget set up. A committee of seven would then be appointed to receive funds. The committee would assess each member an amount, which—it was held—each "shall feel it to be his bounden duty to pay . . . ." Unfortunately

ly the plan broke down the first time it was tried, as the committee was seven months late in presenting a report that could be adopted. Assessments (or subscriptions, as they were sometimes called) were levied in 1859, 1860, and 1861, but these were slow in being paid and debts mounted. The church owed the pastor, janitor, gas company, and numerous merchants in town. Throughout most of 1862 a concerted drive was led by John H. McClung and the debts were liquidated. He reported collections of almost thirty-three hundred dollars from several dozen members and friends whose contributions were carefully listed in the minutes. On January 16, 1863, it was triumphantly announced that all debts were paid and the treasury contained a balance of \$131.15. A pitifully small amount, it nevertheless represented no mean achievement for the congregation, even if payments had been made in debased Confederate currency.

One now-unfamiliar form of gaining revenue for local purposes was afforded to the church when the new building was occupied. It was agreed to rent the pews, and a committee was named to supervise this operation which was perhaps done in the form of a public auction on Saturday, September 29, 1855. For the years 1856 through 1859 the pews were regularly rented by a committee elected for that purpose. After discussion "the pews were declared free, from and after the 1st day of Jany next [1860]." This arrangement did not prove entirely satisfactory, however, and on November 17, 1860, a compromise position was reached. "Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to rent the Pews of this Church for the year 1861, and that there be reserved—as free seats, the front side seats, and such others as the Committee may determine. Resolved 2ndly. That the Committee be instructed, to rent with the proviso—that all pews are *free* to visitors—at all times." The local paper announced that on November 9, 1861, the pews would be rented for the following year. Probably the system was discontinued after 1862 at the request of Pastor D. W. Gwin, being resumed only after the war.

Meantime, the congregation had not neglected the needy persons of the community or its missionary obligations. In 1854 a committee was appointed "to act in concert with the Deacons, in relation to making provision for the poor." Two years later \$17.90 was raised by voluntary contribution and two families were aided from this and the general treasury. A third reference was made in 1860 when one member was selected to solicit donations for the relief of a less fortunate member. Perhaps soon thereafter a quarterly collection in connection with the communion service was begun to provide

funds for worthwhile purposes that included assisting the poor.

Mission gifts totaled at least \$1,196.46-1/4, as follows: associational missions, \$305.31-1/4; domestic (home) missions, \$98.97; foreign missions, \$138.21; Southern Baptist Publication Society, \$45.22; Southern Baptist Sunday School Union, \$101.50; Cherokee Baptist Convention, \$22.00; army colportage, \$6.25; Indian missions through E. L. Compere, \$479.00. The church minutes almost never mention missions; twice a committee was appointed "to attend to missionary contributions" and once a mission offering was set for the morrow. Obviously, however, much else in that area was done which the clerk did not see fit to describe.

### *THE SUNDAY SCHOOL*

The Sunday school was organized in 1848 with A. B. Ross as first superintendent, but little else is known of its early years. Initially it was quite small; the three Baptist Sunday schools in the vicinity of Rome had a combined enrollment in 1851 of one hundred. A union meeting of the different schools in Rome met at the Baptist church in 1852, and Pastor Stillwell was one of the speakers. The news account provides evidence that the schools were intended for the children: "It is greatly to be desired that these excellent institutions be generally fostered by all classes of our citizens. Especially should parents take a deep interest in their success."

Apparently Ross remained superintendent until about 1861, when he was succeeded briefly by G. B. T. Moore. Bewailing Moore's untimely death, members of the Sunday school passed resolutions on April 7, 1861, which were quoted in Rome, Atlanta, and Nashville newspapers! Also serving briefly, A. R. Harper was superintendent and J. S. Panchen, assistant superintendent. Their resignations "to devote themselves to the service of their country" were noted in resolutions passed on June 9, 1861, and signed by the secretary, Arthur S. Sullivan. Shortly thereafter, Charles E. Hills became superintendent, retaining that position until 1882.

Signs of vigor — and a probable indication of size — emerged in the early sixties. "Romeo" (perhaps A. B. Ross) observed that the Sunday school was increasing in number and interest, thanks to an active superintendent and a few teachers who deserved much credit. Late in 1862, Pastor Gwin reported: "The Sabbath School has been flourishing. Eight of its members have been converted and bid fair to be efficient co-workers in this field of Christian effort. Each member of the church should inquire 'Is it not my duty to be a

teacher or a scholar in the Sab. School? It should be the privilege of all to encourage it, at least, by frequent visits and donations." The following year he observed: "Many teachers are learning that regular prayer *for* their scholars and *with* them—at *their homes*, is necessary to success." A visitor in town noted "a pretty hymn sweetly sung by the children of the Baptist School . . . ."

The first positive word concerning instructional materials came from Superintendent Hills in a letter written to Samuel Boykin, editor of the *Christian Index* in Macon: "If you will furnish a Sunday School paper as good in its way as the Index, our school will take 100 copies . . . . We must have a Sabbath School paper from some source." In September of 1862 the *Child's Index* was initiated, and the Rome church ordered two hundred copies—suggesting a maximum size for the school. That Hills was personally concerned with Christian education is seen also by his preparation later that year of "The Child's Hymn-Book. A choice collection of Hymns for the use of Sabbath-Schools." Available for twenty cents a copy from the compiler, this pamphlet appeared just before the Rome church and its Sunday school were closed by the war. It should be stated that the Southern Baptist Publication Society (Charleston) and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Union (Nashville) had prepared curricular materials and that the Rome church had supported both agencies at one time or another. Hence, it is entirely possible that the church had used their materials before 1862, but this cannot be verified.

For several years prior to 1860 a union Sunday school celebration had been an annual spring event in Rome. Announcing "*a children's frolic*," the *Rome Weekly Courier* affirmed: "'Grown folks' will not be excluded, but they must behave themselves and not interfere with the 'puckwudgies.'" The day-long festivities at a nearby farm consisted of singing, talks, games, and an abundance of food. The 1861 "Pic Nic" included an additional feature—a Confederate flag made of flowers.

"The Rome Bible Class" for men met briefly in 1860. Independent of the Sunday school, it convened at the Baptist church every Sunday afternoon at five and was taught by Augustus R. Wright. Every two weeks an evening meeting was supposed to occur, when a member would deliver an address to the members and their guests. Only one such session is known: Robert T. Fouche spoke on the topic, "Jerusalem as it was, Jerusalem as it is, and Jerusalem as it will be."

## WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

First called the "Ladies' Working Society of the Baptist Church," the women organized themselves on November 8, 1850, as a group to forward the interests of their local church. No missionary activities can be seen in the earliest decade of the society. In 1851 the ladies collected \$74.25—perhaps to erect a porch on the first church building. The following year they helped to purchase the new lot at an expenditure of \$525, and soon donated an additional \$73.55. Such funds were raised, in part at least, by holding "fairs"—one of which was described by the *Courier*: "The entertainment gotten up by the ladies of the Baptist Church last week was, altogether, a very handsome and tasteful affair. The supper was magnificent, the company large and agreeable, and we trust our fair friends were liberally remunerated for their labor and trouble." Although the notices do not usually tell where such events were held, on one occasion the Buena Vista House, a local hotel, was used. In 1855 the ladies paid the balance of the pastor's salary for 1853 and 1854. As the new church building was occupied, they provided about \$750 for many of its furnishings and a new organ. By 1862 they had donated about \$300 more for local purposes. The first indication of a missionary concern came in 1863 as the ladies contributed \$150 for domestic (home) and foreign missions through the Georgia Baptist Convention. The total number of members is never known, but an 1883 list of "a few who belonged to the organization" in its earliest years includes twenty-five names.

## THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

Members of the Rome Baptist Church displayed an interest in education beyond the Sunday school. The founding of a manual labor school was recommended by the Coosa Association in 1837, and churches in the association were asked to express their feelings. The Rome church gave guarded approval: "The church is of the opinion that such an Institution, is altogether desirable, provided, we had the means to carry on such an Institution to operation, and so soon as the association thinks they can carry the School into successful operation, we would recommend the association to make an effort to accomplish the great object." In the summer of 1838 the residents of Vans Valley made plans for such a school. Opened the following year as the Cave Spring Manual Labor School (later Hearn Academy) it was chartered at the request of a board of trustees that included a former and a future pastor of the Rome church,

Hugh Quinn and Humphrey Posey, and two then-current members, Thomas W. Burton and Wesley Shropshire. Even though the school was not directly under the association, doubtless the church's affirmative vote in 1837 provided stimulus for the individual action taken by some of its members.

A community effort produced a charter approved in 1850 calling for the Cherokee College of Georgia to be opened in or near Rome. Among its trustees were Alfred Shorter, then a member of the Rome church, and Augustus R. Wright, whose letter would soon be placed in the church. In an attempt to gain public support for the venture, meetings were held in 1851 and 1852. Classes were begun about 1853 in what was first called the Cherokee Female Institute and, after 1857, the Rome Female College. Although this school was never under Baptist control, obviously local Baptists supported it.

Probably at the request of their newly called pastor, Shaler G. Hillyer, the congregation in conference appointed a committee "to take into consideration the propriety of establishing a female school in this city . . . ." Four days later, on December 27, 1856, the church took this action: "On motion, it was agreed, to grant brother Hillyer the use of the lecture Room, for opening and teaching a female School, if a more suitable place cannot be procured. . . . The furnishing, Desks, Chairs &c for the contemplated School, referred to the School Committee." It is likely that this school continued throughout most of his thirty-three-month pastorate, but no confirmation has been discovered.

Two Baptist colleges in neighboring communities were favored by the Rome church. The Woodland Female College, operating under various names in Cedartown from 1851 to 1859, had two Rome trustees: Shaler G. Hillyer and Charles H. Stillwell (secretary, 1854-1855). The daughters or wards of at least three local Baptists were in attendance, according to the three catalogues remaining. Open from 1856 to 1861 in Cassville, the Cherokee Baptist College for men had four members of the church on its large board of trustees: Shaler G. Hillyer, John H. McClung, John H. Rice, and Charles H. Stillwell. Several Rome or Floyd County men are listed as students in the four extant catalogues, but none can be definitely linked with the Rome congregation. Whether financial gifts were made to either institution can no longer be determined.

### *BLACKS IN THE CHURCH*

Over a period of thirty years, at least 128 blacks were associated

with the Rome Baptist Church—about 36 men and 92 women. Most of their names are found in a separate roll kept in the back of the minute book, although 36 are mentioned only within the minutes as they were involved in church business. Usually they are listed simply by their first names, with the notation “servant of so-and-so” or with the name of their master in parentheses. Many of the slaves were owned by members of the Rome church, and occasionally a master and slave would join at the same time. Twenty-five joined the church by baptism, 26 by transfer of church letter, 4 by watch-care, and 73 by ways not indicated. Twenty-nine left the church by letter, 6 by excommunication or being dropped, 13 by death, 31 by ways not indicated, and 25 by leaving town during the war. About 24 remained in Floyd County in 1865.

Because of inaccuracies in the minutes and the absence of most associational records, it is seldom possible to determine the number of black members at any given time. During the first decade, from one to six were members each year. The first two, Henry and his wife Rachael, joined the church by letter on June 20, 1835. No doubt they and a few others attended services with the whites, unobtrusively sitting in the back of the room. As the black group got larger, a partition was erected across the back in 1849, thus formally segregating the races.

Gradual growth came during the second decade, being reflected in figures taken from the minutes of the Coosa Baptist Association: 38 blacks in 1853 and 1855; 44 blacks in 1854 and 1857. This increase coincided with a significant alteration in the relationship of the blacks to the white congregation. In the early fifties black members were permitted to hold separate services and conferences—although attended by a committee of trusted whites appointed for that purpose. Thereafter the blacks served on committees to discipline their fellows or to raise money from them for the pastor and African missions. On June 12, 1852, an important action was taken when the church “granted letters of dismissal to the colored members of this church, the application made in order to be constituted into a church, with the understanding that, they be continued under the watch care and guardianship of this church, and at least three male members of this church be in attendance with them in their meetings as required by the laws of the land.” As indicated by an 1860 motion, “Ordered by the Church that the benches in the basement of the Church belonging to the colored members of the church shall not be taken out on any occasion whatever,” the blacks probably worshiped in the basement. Judging by the number of supervisory committees appointed to attend their meetings, the

blacks evidently met each Sunday. Presumably leadership would be provided by a black preacher or preachers belonging to the congregation, but nothing definite remains as a part of the minutes. On December 19, 1862, Pastor Gwin reported to the white conference that in the preceding fifteen months he had preached "a number [of sermons] to the colored members." He continued: "The Instruction of the Colored Members is one of the most difficult portions of my work. The combination of the interesting and the instructive has been my endeavor."

At least three black Baptists preached in Rome before the Civil War. They would necessarily conform to the state black code of 1834 making it unlawful for free or slave blacks to preach or exhort before an assembly of more than seven unless licensed by a judge on the certification of three white ordained ministers. Lewis, the property of Rev. John Hendricks, felt a call to the gospel ministry, and a committee of whites was appointed to investigate his qualifications. Their findings were not recorded. Two other men, neither of whom was apparently a member of the Rome church, fell under white scrutiny. One made application for permission to speak in the church, and two whites looked into his "standing" and the law regulating such cases. The other, a member of a South Carolina church, had been preaching in Rome. His home church evidently questioned his character and asked the Rome congregation to confer with him and report back. After consulting with the slave and his owner, the Rome body declared that he had a "good general character," forgave certain offenses against him, and notified his home church.

The congregation faced one tragic ethical problem peculiar to the slaves when "Jim a colored Bro. . . . enquired of the church whether it would be admissable and proper for him to marry, his wife having [probably been sold and] moved a great distance from him, and no probability of a chance of reunion . . . ." The next conference declared: "We in answer to the request of our black brother, Jim, feel impelled by the word of God to say that no one should have taken two companions living at the same time; that he be advised to remain as he is, and, that all such cases in [the] future be attended to as single cases." Quite evidently he quietly obeyed the dictates of the church, remaining one of its most active members throughout the entire period. In this action the Rome church showed its disagreement with those Baptist churches which allowed remarriage under such circumstances, considering the distant spouse to be the same as deceased.

Following the war, the black Baptists—about twenty-four at first—continued to use the church temporarily. On May 18, 1866,

"permission was given to use the basement of the church for the purpose of holding a Sabbath School for Freedmen." Four months later, "after a full discussion," this resolution was adopted: "Resolved that we tender our sympathies to the colored members of our church and appoint a committee to aid in reorganizing their conference, and we also assure them the same privileges extended to them heretofore an[d] still freely tendered." In a letter dated October 1, 1867, the church reported to the Coosa Baptist Association: "The coloured members have been organised into a seperate church." A separate meeting place, hinted at by the 1867 statement, was confirmed on June 18, 1869, when "On motion . . . the seats and Benches used in the Basement of the Church were donated to the Coloured Baptist Church of this city." Thereafter the minutes contain no substantive references to the blacks; the division had been completed.

#### *OTHER DENOMINATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS*

In its relationship to non-Baptist denominations and other organizations, the Rome church was rarely antagonistic and usually open and friendly, as occasional references indicate. In 1837 a controversy over open communion threatened the peace of the body, resulting in an affirmation of closed communion. Twelve years later one black member was excluded for joining a Methodist church. On the other hand, the minutes say that on Saturday, May 11, 1840, "The Baptist Church, and Methodist Church, associated in Worship and continued during the day. No conference was held." With frequency between 1845 and 1849 the Presbyterian church conducted its services in the Methodist and Baptist meetinghouses before its own sanctuary was completed. Led by Pastor Edwin Dyer, who was assisted occasionally by Methodist and Presbyterian preachers, a revival late in 1847 resulted in at least fourteen additions. When the Coosa Association met in Rome in 1850, the Presbyterian church opened its pulpit to Baptist visitors. It is understandable that the normally ecumenical Methodists did not follow suit, since they were still occupying temporary quarters. In 1857 the Rome Baptists tendered their building to the Presbyterians for their synod. The Methodist Conference convened in Rome two years later, and the Baptist meetinghouse was offered for these sessions. Although, the Methodists used the city hall for this purpose, they did send preachers into the Baptist and Presbyterian pulpits. Union Sunday school functions and prayer meetings during the Civil War served further to cement relations between the groups. As will soon be

seen, Rome Baptists gave limited support to the Landmark movement that magnified differences between denominations—but throughout most of the antebellum years were considerably more magnanimous toward their non-Baptist neighbors than the Landmarkers were.

The Floyd County Temperance Union was organized at the courthouse on June 1, 1852, with Charles H. Stillwell on the executive committee. It met regularly into September of that year, but information is lacking beyond that time. Eight years later the Sons of Temperance were formed with three officers from the Rome church. A fourth officer soon joined the local church—and was excluded for intoxication two years later! The club was still active early in 1861, with Baptist men in places of leadership, but evidence is not available after then.

The Rome church displayed support for the Young Men's Christian Association also, granting them the use of the basement for their regular meetings in 1858. This arrangement was only temporary; in 1860 the association was meeting in the city hall. While it is entirely probable that local Baptists were members and leaders of the group, nothing certain has been found.

#### *OTHER BAPTIST CHURCHES*

In several different ways, the Rome Baptist Church was related directly with other Baptist churches. From 1838 through 1853 the minutes contain many references to opening or maintaining "correspondence" with at least eleven churches in Floyd and adjoining counties. Men were officially appointed to attend quarterly communion meetings and business conferences of nearby congregations, and visits were exchanged to increase fellowship between churches.

Occasionally the Rome group was asked to give advice on problems being faced by sister churches. The Pisgah church requested help in 1839 on the question of receiving or rejecting a person as a member, and a committee was appointed. The Mount Pleasant church invited aid "to assist in the settlement of a difficulty pending in the church"; the request was granted in a fashion made no more specific by the minutes than the description of the difficulty being faced. Experiencing trouble with their pastor, the Pleasant Grove church of Chattooga County sent a letter seeking advice in 1853, and a committee that included Pastor Stillwell was named. He attended a five-day council under the auspices of the Coosa Association that recommended action against the pastor.

Sporadically over a period of three years the Rome church found itself involved in a controversy related to Rev. Archibald Fitzgerald. In March of 1850 the Cave Spring Baptist Church excommunicated Fitzgerald, one of its members but not its pastor, who had accused the body of being improperly constituted and subsequently guilty of spiritual "corruption." He turned to the Rome church in June, appealing for an investigation of the charges upon which he had been excluded. A minority in the Cave Spring church siding with Fitzgerald wrote two letters repeating the appeal. Supporting the Cave Spring majority, the Rome church voted not to intervene. Soon the Cedar Creek church entered the picture, favoring Fitzgerald and, in the summer of 1851, convening an investigative council that was attended by some men representing the Rome church—probably including Stillwell, who by then was pastor at Cave Spring. When the council named a committee to approach Cave Spring on Fitzgerald's behalf, Stillwell led the church to reject the effort. In the process he was accused of dishonesty by members of the committee, but the Rome church declared him innocent. That fall Cedar Creek brought action before the Coosa Association against the Cave Spring congregation, and the association in resolutions presented by Stillwell pronounced the excommunication entirely proper and necessary. While details of the controversy are now far from clear—even though Cedar Creek published a forty-page pamphlet explaining its side of the story—it was concluded on a happy note in 1853 when Fitzgerald was restored to the Cave Spring fellowship as an ordained minister at the recommendation of a committee that included Stillwell.

Of the fourteen or more Baptist churches organized in Floyd County before 1865, several are known to have had members coming from the Rome church. A few joined the Cave Spring, Fellowship, Moriah, and Mount Pleasant congregations, and surely there were others. In 1850, letters were granted to twelve for the purpose of forming a new church—the Friendship Baptist Church, north of town on the Calhoun Road.

One other church is far more obscure. On November 3, 1860, the Second Baptist Church of Rome was started with six members, one of whom came by letter from what was for the first time called the First Baptist Church. Two men were on the constituting presbytery, H. A. Smith and P. W. Lamkin. The former became the church's first pastor, and the latter was then a member of the larger Rome church. An advertisement five months later revealed that the Second church met on the fourth Saturday and Sunday with C. B. Martin as pastor. Its services continued at least through Janu-

ary 11, 1863, when it issued a letter to one of its members who transferred it to the Rome Baptist Church in 1867. Probably the church was not reactivated after the war; certainly it cannot be identified with any body now existing in Rome.

### *THE COOSA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION*

Never the largest nor most generous member of the Coosa Baptist Association, the Rome Baptist Church nevertheless played an active role in its affairs from the very beginning. An undated item in the church minutes connects the congregation with the foundation of the association: "The Church at Rome met in Conference, and resolved to send two delegates (to wit. brethren Hugh Quinn and Thos. H. Cliett Ministers of the Gospel) to the convention to be held at Oothcaloga Church [near Adairsville] on Friday before the third Sabbath in this month for the purpose of forming a new association." Obviously this refers to a meeting held on October 16, 1835, when the need for a northwest Georgia association was discussed and the Coosa Baptist Association was formed. Initially made up of 10 churches with 122 members, it grew to 39 churches with 1,814 members in 1860.

Annually in the fall the church appointed official "delegates"—two were allowed each church before 1857; thereafter the pastor was always considered a third. Alternates were also selected, since occasionally one of the first choices found that he had to be absent. Some of the Rome church's most faithful supporters attended: T. W. Burton, A. A. Cobb, A. B. Reece, A. E. Reeves, Alfred Shorter, Job Rogers, Samuel Johnson, A. B. Ross, and Elijah Lumpkin. In the fall the church usually also approved a letter to the association prepared previously by the clerk or someone else, and decided how large an offering to send by the delegates. It is known to have contributed a total of \$305.31-1/4 to various associational projects in the twenty-one years for which records have been found.

The Rome church also furnished leadership for the association. While Humphrey Posey, James H. B. Shackelford, and Edwin Dyer were pastors of the church, they were moderators of the association. Clerks included Elijah Lumpkin, Charles H. Stillwell, and A. B. Ross. At each associational meeting individuals and committees were appointed to perform a multitude of functions. Thus, over the years Rome men wrote the circular letter sent from the association to its constituent churches, preached the introductory or missionary sermon, were named delegates to the Georgia or Cherokee Baptist conventions, were elected to the association's executive

committee as members or chairmen, were appointed correspondents from the association to numerous neighboring district bodies, and acted on committees related to membership, discipline, finances, revising the constitution and other associational documents, preaching, education, publications, order of business, deceased ministers, missions, nominations, answering queries sent from member churches, and organizing the Cherokee Convention.

In 1838 and again in 1850 the association met in Rome, necessitating a great deal of preparation on the part of the church. By June 1838 an "arranging committee" had already been formed, and in September another committee was appointed "to select a suitable place for preaching during the session of the association," since the church then owned no building. Twelve years later "a committee of arrangements for the association" was not officially named until August, suggesting far less anxiety on the part of the church! In both cases, the church and town would be extremely busy in the weeks immediately preceding the great occasion. Perhaps the meetinghouse needed a coat of paint or repairs in 1850. The grounds had to be spotless, and probably long tables were built for some of the meals eaten out of doors. Homes had to be secured to entertain the delegates and other visitors for up to three nights. Sometimes a beef or two, pigs, and sheep were slaughtered and divided among the local members to feed the guests. The ladies took no part in the public proceedings, but their absence would have been hungrily noted had they not prepared bountiful meals. The host church would often prepare a general invitation, as was printed in two 1850 issues of the *Christian Index*:

#### COOSA BAP. ASSOCIATION

This body will convene with the Church in Rome, on Saturday before the 2d Lord's day in October. The introductory services will be held at the meetinghouse, where all Delegates and visiting brethren will find a committee in attendance who will arrange for their accommodation . . . .

CHAS. H. STILLWELL,  
Pastor.

There is no indication of the 1838 attendance; but in 1850, 34

churches sent 61 delegates, and a few other visitors were present.

By 1840 the association had divided its churches into four districts, each of which met at least once a year as a sort of miniature association. Led by an elected moderator and clerk, the union meetings usually lasted for three days that included a fifth Sunday late in the summer or early in the fall. The agenda included preaching, resolutions, offerings, recommendations to churches, questions for the association, and speeches on ecclesiological, theological, and ethical matters. Rome was host for sessions in 1843, 1844, 1848, 1853, 1854, and 1860, providing hospitality for delegates from six to ten churches. Each year the church elected delegates whose names are frequently listed in the minutes of the church: A. E. Reeves, Samuel Johnson, Alfred Shorter, Charles H. Stillwell, A. B. Reece, A. B. Ross, John H. McClung, John F. Cooper, and others. Starting in the forties, ministers' and deacons' meetings were held in each district, sometimes being combined with the district union meetings.

As indicated above, the association regularly received "queries" from member churches, one of which came from the Rome congregation. In 1844 a question was raised concerning a person who takes his letter from a church and refuses to return it if he remains in the neighborhood or refuses to place it in "an orderly church" if he moves away. The association decided against the guilty individual in both cases—he must be considered "in disorder" and dealt with by the church issuing the letter which he holds.

When the association voted in 1848 to establish two depositories for the distribution of religious books, Rome and LaFayette were selected as sites, with A. B. Ross as the Rome agent. By 1851 the venture had apparently run its course, and a small fund derived from profits eventually was spent for associational missions.

The great division between the Missionary and Primitive or Old School Baptists took place in the 1830s, being reflected in action taken by the Coosa Association and the Rome church. The congregational minutes for June 9, 1838, contain this action: "The Church agreed to take up the case in relation to the resolution of the last association in regard to the benevolent Institutions of the day and discuss the Same at our next conference." In July this resolution was passed: "That we consider it inexpedient at present and dangerous to the peace and welfare of this Church, to discuss the propriety or impropriety of the Missionary or benevolent institutions of the day, and therefore refer the Subject indefinitely." Three years later "a certificate embracing the mind of the church relative to the benevolent institutions of the day" was drawn up, but its contents were

not preserved. Obviously, however, the document permitted complete personal freedom in the matter, as the body affirmed in 1844: "We are not disposed to make that subject a test of fellowship, but feel that it is the privilege of each member to enjoy his or her own sentiments on the subject and act in accordance therewith . . . ." While neither the association nor the church became openly Primitive, the antimissionary spirit in the area was evidently quite strong.

Despite this fact, as early as 1842 the association sent delegates and resolved to forward missionary contributions to the Georgia Baptist Convention. In 1855 the association joined the Cherokee Baptist Convention, severing its ties with the state body two years later. As will soon be seen, Rome men were active in the Cherokee Convention throughout its short lifetime.

Stimulated by a letter from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, the Coosa Association in 1849 went on record as favoring regular gifts "equal to 5 cents for each of such Missions as they [the churches] may desire to sustain, from each member . . . leaving each member at liberty to give as little or much as he may feel willing to give." The Rome church received a similar communication from the board, agreeing in January 1850 "to adopt the plan proposed by the association, for raising funds for Missionary purposes." Thereafter, local contributions in this respect were markedly—albeit, modestly—increased.

At various times the association employed missionaries to work in northwest Georgia among the whites. In 1857 David M. Foreman, a native Cherokee, was secured to minister among his own people in the Indian Territory. Urging greater support from the association the following year, Shaler G. Hillyer wrote: "The fact cannot be too often remembered that we now live upon their 'fatherland.' . . . That they parted with it without an adequate equivalent, no man can deny. Therefore, because we are their debtors, we should cheerfully, liberally contribute to give them the Bread of Life." In 1861 Foreman visited many churches in Georgia, including the one in Rome. At the request of the association that fall, the Rome church named two men to collect funds for him.

A movement to divide the Coosa Association in 1852 was opposed by both the association and the Rome church, but to no avail. At the initiative of the Friendship Baptist Church, a convention met on May 29, 1852, "for the purpose of consulting on the propriety of forming a new association." Unable to affirm the necessity of this move, the Rome church at first declined the invitation—and then, the next month, reversed itself. Thirty-four men from fifteen

churches constituted the body, including Pastor Charles H. Stillwell and two other members from Rome. After a full discussion, only Stillwell found it necessary to vote against organizing the Oostanaula Baptist Association, repeating his opposition later in the *Rome Courier* and the *Christian Index*. When the Coosa Association met that fall, it dismissed seven churches to form the new body and made public an extended statement affirming their freedom and deploring their action. No doubt Stillwell was partly responsible for this document—although no author is shown—and the Rome church remained a part of Coosa until the Cave Spring Baptist Association was formed in 1869.

### THE LANDMARK MOVEMENT

Initiated in 1851 by James R. Graves of Nashville, Tennessee, the Landmark movement soon became a strong force throughout the Old Southwest—Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana. In his endeavor, Graves was aided by two other Tennessee leaders, Amos C. Dayton and James M. Pendleton. From the latter came a pamphlet with a title, *An Old Landmark Re-Set*, reflecting Proverbs 22:28 and giving the movement its name. Together, the three men produced a unique combination of ideas and practices, some of which were common to other Baptists as well. Local Baptist congregations were thought to be the only true churches, together comprising the Kingdom of God on earth, and able to trace their lineage back to the New Testament through a succession of non-Roman Catholic bodies. These local Baptist churches were to have all authority—even over the ordinances—not limited by any general body or board. All non-Baptist groups were *societies*, not *churches*. Therefore, Baptists should not accept the so-called baptism of other groups (not even their immersion), not share the Lord's Supper with them, not recognize their ordinations, and not permit their ministers in Baptist pulpits. South and statewide mission boards were held to circumscribe the power of a local church; missionaries could properly be sent out only by a church, an association, or a district convention quickly responsive to the dictates of its constituent churches. Graves and his colleagues attempted unsuccessfully to remake the Southern Baptist Convention over in their image, but gained considerable power that extended into northwest Georgia.

The Rome Baptist Church was receptive to the Landmark movement. All three leaders spoke to the congregation at one time or another, Dayton on two or three occasions. Participation in the pro-

Landmark Cherokee Baptist Convention was an extended act of support, as will be seen in the next section of this essay. A newspaper started at Rome in 1859 and read by its citizens proclaimed its editorial policies by its name, the *Landmark Banner and Cherokee Baptist*.

An important expression of approval came in 1860 when the Rome church hosted the Southern Baptist Sunday School Union. Formed in 1858, soon led by A. C. Dayton, and having no organic connection with the Southern Baptist Convention, this organization had held previous semiannual meetings at Memphis, Tennessee, Cuthbert, Georgia, and Canton, Mississippi. In January 1860 the Rome church issued an invitation for the union to hold its next session in Rome. A seven-man committee on arrangements was named, and a public announcement printed in the *Landmark Banner* and the *Tennessee Baptist* offered free accommodations to all who would come. All three Landmark leaders were present for the convention which extended from Friday through Sunday, July 27 to 29, 1860. Services were held twice daily for children, with speeches and singing aimed specifically at them. The adults attended numerous other sessions at the Baptist church—and a mass meeting in the city hall where Graves preached to a capacity crowd. Special Sunday services were scheduled for the Baptist churches in Rome, Cedartown, and Cave Spring. The official report announced that about six thousand dollars had been raised from the “large number” of delegates from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

However, it must be observed that Rome was not the most fertile field in which the Landmark movement might be cultivated. Throughout the antebellum period the congregation usually adopted an affirmative stance toward its non-Baptist neighbors, as has already been observed. Shaler G. Hillyer, pastor from 1856 to 1859, was a son-in-law of the famous anti-Landmark writer John L. Dagg and publicly recommended his books. In 1860, Charles Stillwell in the *Landmark Banner* attempted “to put my drop of oil on the troubled waters. I would that drop could be as a barrel, and the barrel as a hogshead.” He urged that Georgians “hush, and attend to our business,” ignoring what he thought was a Tennessee problem. Favoring the denominational mission boards, he felt that no division would come because of them. Finally, anti-Landmark leadership was furnished by D. W. Gwin, who had been trained in Virginia, where the movement had almost no force, and was under the influence of Robert B. C. Howell, Graves’ chief foe. Gwin unsurprisingly sought membership for the church’s missionary society at the 1863

Georgia Baptist Convention, marking the end of a decade apart from the state body. Probably Stillwell's continuing presence in northwest Georgia contributed to the post-Civil War swing in that area back toward the center of denominational life.

### *THE CHEROKEE GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION*

Led by John Crawford and Edwin Dyer, former pastors of the Rome Baptist Church and therefore known and trusted by its people, the Cherokee Baptist Convention was organized in 1854 at Cassville by representatives of Coosa and Middle Cherokee associations comprised of about 62 churches, having a total membership of about 4,669. At its height about 1860, it was comprised of more than 250 churches in 8 associations, having a total membership of about 15,540. Charles H. Stillwell was present at the constituting meeting as the clerk and, together with A. B. Ross, was one of the incorporators of the convention. At the annual meetings thereafter, Rome men were in places of leadership. Stillwell and Ross were clerks or assistant clerks; Ross and Shaler G. Hillyer were on the executive committee. Other Rome delegates were George B. T. Moore, John H. Rice, A. R. Wright, E. B. Wood, D. W. Gwin, and P. W. Lamkin. These men served on committees concerning education, preaching, nominations, and Sunday schools, and were appointed as correspondents to numerous Baptist bodies in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Florida. Both Stillwell and Hillyer delivered sermons to the convention. Two colleges were controlled by the organization, and each had trustees from the Rome church. Surely its members were regular financial contributors to the convention and its interests, but the fragmentary records extant show gifts of only twelve dollars in 1860 and ten in 1863.

Two annual sessions of the body were convened in Rome, 1858 and 1863. Although the church minutes are silent concerning the former, official convention minutes and newspaper articles provide a clear picture of the event. The usual "Committee of Arrangements" published "a general and cordial invitation" in several journals. No more than fifty delegates and visitors attended the meeting that extended from May 15 to 18, and was virtually dominated by J. R. Graves. He preached "eloquently, forcibly and interestingly for about 90 minutes as to chain the attention of the entire audience" at the Baptist church on Sunday, advocated on Monday afternoon "the cause of Baptist Sabbath Schools, with much force and ability," delivered an "eminently rich" address concerning Christian education that evening, and spoke the next afternoon in favor

of the Cherokee Baptist College at Cassville. Pastor Shaler G. Hill-  
yer, Charles H. Stillwell, and A. B. Ross represented the host  
church as active participants in the business conducted.

A delegation of perhaps thirty-five met in Rome from May 15 to  
18, 1863, at what proved to be the last annual session of the conven-  
tion. The church minutes report a six-man committee appointed to  
prepare for the occasion—which almost did not occur. Had General  
Nathan B. Forrest failed to thwart the efforts of Streight's Raiders  
sent early in the month to destroy Rome, the city would have been  
in ashes on May 15. Actions at the gathering frequently related to  
the war. Among these was a resolution encouraging pastors to be-  
come temporary army evangelists—a resolution which, apparently,  
was heeded only by D. W. Gwin, who presented it. Rome was by  
then declared a "hospital city," sometimes having a thousand con-  
valescing soldiers in the area. Large numbers of patients attended  
sessions of the convention, which acted to distribute Testaments  
among the nearby hospitals. The local church was officially repre-  
sented by E. B. Wood, A. R. Wright, Charles H. Stillwell, A. B.  
Ross, and the pastor, though surely many others crowded the sanc-  
tuary.

From 1861 to 1864 the convention supported a white missionary  
to the Cherokee Indians, Ebenezer L. Compere, on a half-time ba-  
sis. Coming east in 1863 to solicit money and goods for homeless  
and starving Indians who favored the Confederacy, Compere  
voiced his appeal in Rome, where at least \$479 was raised. In addi-  
tion, the ladies of the congregation appointed a large committee to  
gather clothing. The *Banner* writer observed: "The work was com-  
mitted to safe hands."

After the death of the Cherokee Convention in 1864, the Rome  
church increasingly expressed its loyalty to the state Baptist con-  
vention.

### THE GEORGIA BAPTIST CONVENTION

The Georgia Baptist Convention received a small amount of sup-  
port from the Rome Baptist Church. Formed in 1822 by representa-  
tives from 2 associations comprised of 81 churches and 5,625 mem-  
bers, the convention grew over the years until by 1863 it encom-  
passed 22 associations, 588 churches, and 57,956 members. By that  
time there were also 20 missionary associations not in the conven-  
tion, having about 419 churches and 25,385 members, and 23 Primi-  
tive associations, having about 388 churches and 11,000 members.  
Hugh Quinn, John Crawford, William Wood, and James H. B.

Shackelford attended sessions, but not while serving as pastor in Rome. Humphrey Posey, Edwin Dyer, Charles H. Stillwell, Shaler G. Hillyer, and D. W. Gwin were all in attendance while associated with the Rome congregation—and at other times also. At two meetings each, Posey and Dyer both expressed a keen interest in Indian missions. At four meetings, Stillwell acted on several committees, participated in the business sessions, delivered one sermon, and once served as assistant clerk. At three meetings, Hillyer served on one committee and preached a sermon. At a single meeting, Gwin was named to a convention committee and elected a delegate to the Southern Baptist Convention (which he did not attend). Three other members attended sessions: A. B. Ross in 1853, A. R. Wright in 1856, and T. J. Perry in 1857.

In 1848 the Rome church asked the convention for help in securing a pastor, pledging \$250 on his salary. The body received the request, but nothing was subsequently done by way of a published response.

According to the convention minutes for 1863, "The Rome Baptist Church Missionary Society applied [to become an auxiliary to the state convention] through its delegates, D. W. Gwin, and D. B. Hamilton [who was not then a member of the Rome church], which, after hearing the constitution, was unanimously received." Membership requirements called for one delegate for the first \$50 and one for each additional \$100, with a limit of three per society. The Rome society had sent \$50 for domestic (home) missions and \$100 for foreign missions, thus earning the right to two representatives. Needing no approval from the church as a whole, the society had by its action involved the mission-minded members of the congregation in a desirable cause without disturbing the settled beliefs of those having no similar interest—as countless other Baptist societies had been doing all over the country and on the British Isles throughout the nineteenth century.

### *THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION*

Although news regarding the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention at Augusta, Georgia, in 1845 must have reached Rome, the local church took no recorded notice of the event. Mostly from Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia, 293 accredited messengers formed the convention that was composed of 213 associations, 4,395 churches, and 365,346 members. Within fifteen years it had enlarged to 316 associations, 7,760 churches, and 645,218 members. Shaler G. Hillyer, Charles H. Stillwell, Humphrey Posey, and Ed-

win Dyer attended various meetings of the convention, but not as pastor of the Rome church. The actions taken in 1850 and 1851 to secure help from the Domestic Mission Board for the pastor's salary have already been noted, as well as the small contributions to the various convention interests. Apart from these, the Rome church ignored the southwide convention.

### THE CIVIL WAR

Well before D. W. Gwin's coming to Rome as pastor, the community had been embroiled in a civil war. In February 1860 a general meeting called upon the local citizens to support only Southern merchants and purchase only Southern goods, and several Rome Baptist men were prominent in making this plea. The following month—after Lincoln had been nominated for the presidency by the Republicans—Charles H. Stillwell wrote an essay for the *Landmark Banner*, insisting: "The truth is that the present is unhappily a religious and not a political controversy. It is a dispute which our statesmen have no power to decide and which the people, divided as they are in sentiment, never can agree upon, because each side are convinced that they are right according to God's Word . . . ." Lincoln had declared slavery to be "wrong," fixing "the odium of sin upon the slaveholder . . . ." In this desperate situation, only God can redeem the situation. "Let us, every one for himself, North and South, East and West—as an American citizen—as a father or mother—as a freesoiler or slaveholder refer the whole immediately to him in prayer and ask him to grant us a solution of the distressing problem."

While Stillwell was praying, other Romans took different actions. Three military organizations were formed—infantry, cavalry, and artillery; splendid uniforms were secured; drills and parades were well attended. Following the Fourth of July parade in 1860 there was no "Ball," leading "Romeo" (perhaps A. B. Ross) to comment: "It speaks well of our worthy companies . . . . [They] love to cultivate morality and respect for religion."

Following Lincoln's election, Rome citizens met to demand that Georgia declare itself independent and start arming itself. The governor of the state thereupon appointed Wednesday, November 28, as a day of public fasting, humiliation, and prayer—observed in Rome by all four churches. Soon the *Rome Weekly Courier* noted, "The military spirit has completely taken the place," and devoted its columns increasingly to political and military news. Two Rome Baptist men were prominent in the broader political life of the

times: F. C. Shropshire attended the state convention declaring Georgia's secession, and A. R. Wright served in the Confederate Congress from 1861 to 1863. Supported by the Rome church, the Cherokee Baptist Convention met at Calhoun in May 1861, producing resolutions written in part by A. B. Ross: "War is forced upon us. The government at Washington . . . is a military despotism, ruled by the spirit of a mob, moved by fanaticism, and guided by peculiar sectional interests. A man styled President . . . levies troops . . . to ravage and lay waste our country, destroy our property . . . and make us subject to a willful and aggressive majority." Clearly Rome and northwest Georgia felt ready for the battles before them.

In response to the capture of Fort Sumter, the three Rome military companies tendered their services to the Confederate States of America, and by the end of May had left for camp. One of Charles H. Stillwell's daughters made a speech at the presentation of a flag to one of them. In all, an estimated 2,000 men saw military service in these and other Floyd County units. Of this number, the Rome Baptist Church contributed 36 men, almost 80 percent more proportionately than the county as a whole. The minutes for August 18, 1861, read: "The Church directed the Clerk to enter the names of brethren who have volunteered in the service of their country leaving a space to give dates of their departure, and other remarks touching their service, etc." As might be expected, most of them were enlisted men, although one became a major, two lieutenant colonels, one a colonel, and one a major general. Eight men lost their lives in Virginia and Tennessee. Soon after the death of one young man, his mother died in deep grief, being considered by her fellow church members to be as much a martyr to the cause as her son. At least nine were reported sick or wounded, while two were captured by the enemy and lived to tell the story. Two others were in and out of Rome with some frequency, acting as recruiters and business agents for various military units. One of these was quite efficient in rounding up deserters, finding 140 of them in Floyd County in one ten-day period. Commented the *Courier*: "Shirks stand a slim chance when Lt. [Thomas J.] Perry is on their track." Expecting a proper deportment even in the army, the church saw fit to excommunicate two of its soldier-members for intoxication and "disreputable conduct."

The experiences of several Rome Baptist members were of an exceptional nature. In May of 1861 Captain E. J. Magruder of the Rome Light Guards and Florence Fouche were married by Charles H. Stillwell at the church. The bride and groom were escorted into

the sanctuary by uniformed soldiers who stood as attendants in each aisle during the ceremony. "The effect was quite imposing," observed the *Courier*. Shortly thereafter the new Mrs. Magruder, "armed to the teeth," left for Virginia with her husband's company. Writing back to a Rome friend, "I would rather be a soldier than a soldier's wife," she was described by the *Courier* as one who "brightened the drabness of camp by frequent visits from the Virginia home of her father-in-law where she stayed."

While fighting near Manassas in July 1861, Charles Harper was captured by enemy troops. Once in Federal hands, he began to recruit other Southern soldiers to surrender, much to the delight of his enemies. As described by the *Landmark Banner*, after a couple of hours enough Southerners had been gathered that Harper, "in a firm tone, and a twinkle of fun in his eye, called upon them [the Northerners] to lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners of war! The prisoners at that moment seized their guns, and a glance satisfied the guard that they were *considerably outnumbered*. 'Come, gentlemen,' said Young America, 'no delay—turn about is fair play. You have now been on guard several hours protecting us, and we will now *relieve* you and return your kindness.' At the close of the battle the captive marched his captors to the quarters of his commanding officer [Colonel J. F. Cooper, also a member of the Rome church] with no little degree of satisfaction...."

A court-martial in 1862 involved yet another Rome Baptist member, Thomas J. Perry. Stationed as a lieutenant near Savannah, early that year he had written back to Rome, asking for Testaments, hymnbooks, tracts, and books for the Sunday school class that he had organized. He wrote of preaching services twice each Sunday—and a limited amount of gambling by officers and enlisted men in his unit. Because of an article by him against gambling and card-playing, he was tried and censured by the 25th Georgia Regiment. Under the watchcare of the Savannah Baptist Church at the time, he was investigated by a committee from that body and declared to be blameless. Their report, sent to the Rome church and soon printed in the *Christian Index* and the *Rome Courier*, stated in part: "The publication of the article referred to may be an infraction of military rule, but certainly no violation of any known moral or religious duty. We cordially state that we believe he was in the discharge of a high christian duty in thus grappling with this fascinating sin in its comparative incipency in their midst."

Meanwhile, the home folks were graphically aware of the war, supporting it in diverse ways. The county raised money to outfit troops and to help their families left behind; committees disbursing

such funds included Charles H. Stillwell and Alfred Shorter. Several Baptist men made outright gifts of money directly to various military companies throughout the conflict. Two local civilian members of the church acted as recruiters and general agents for military units, urging through the newspapers a constant flow of money and supplies. C. M. Pennington is said to have invented a new kind of ironclad warship and also a new type of cannonball, but both of his projects came to naught. The Ladies Benevolent Association was formed in January 1861 to relieve the condition of the city's destitute, and several Baptist ladies were officers and members. That fall the Floyd County Soldiers' Aid Society was formed at the Baptist church, with Charles H. Stillwell as president. Hundreds of donations provided goods for the soldiers in Virginia; the lists printed in the local papers contain numerous Baptist names. Young girls were not overlooked in the war effort, as more than sixty enrolled in the Children's Aid Society and did needlework for their absent kinsmen and friends. Beginning in June 1861 union prayer meetings were held by the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians in the city hall once or twice a week, while others were held at Saint Peter's Episcopal Church. Cold weather halted the meetings, but a whistle signaled the faithful to pray wherever they were at the time. Apparently the corporate services were resumed the following spring. At least seven days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer—called by Governor Joseph E. Brown or President Jefferson Davis—were observed in Rome between June 1861 and December 1863, marked by closing all businesses and by services of worship in all or some of the local churches. Following the Southern victory at the Second Battle of Manassas, President Davis appointed a day of thanksgiving to God for His support of the Confederate cause, a day that Rome gladly noted. Metal became a scarce commodity in the South during 1862, leading the local Methodist and Episcopal churches to offer their bells. As it turned out, they were not needed for armaments—but the Rome congregation did take that opportunity to sell its old bell for \$15. In the summer of 1862 the number of wounded soldiers passing through town had grown to such a magnitude that the ladies—some of them Baptist—opened the Soldiers' Relief Room near the train station and provided bandages, cots, and food.

A total of five hospitals for disabled soldiers operated in downtown Rome for a year following December 1862, leading the *Courier* to quip: "Rome is fast becoming noted for its hospital-ity." Supported by several Baptists, the Ladies Hospital Relief Association performed its deeds of mercy after April 1863. Crowded with

as many as a thousand men at one time, the hospitals were visited regularly by the local pastors, including D. W. Gwin, and by several Baptist missionaries. Often they made use of the Baptist sanctuary to conduct special services for ambulatory patients. One described Gwin's work: "He preached to us, earnestly and affectionately, and also invited any who wished to talk upon the subject of religion to come to his study . . . . He explained to me the way of salvation . . . . I have determined to make my little Testament, which I received in Rome, my constant companion . . . . I may fall in the next battle, but thank God I now feel prepared to die." Reflecting the end of September in 1863, the *Courier* recorded: "A considerable revival has been going on among the convalescent soldiers in our Hospitals, during the past week, at the Baptist Church. Seven were immersed in the Oostanaula River, at Flat Rock, on Sunday evening last." Three of these joined the Rome church, being dismissed by letter before the close of the year.

Throughout the war, Charles H. Stillwell remained an energetic proponent of the Southern cause. Visiting eastern Tennessee, where Rome units were stationed, he reported through the *Courier* a disheartening lack of care for the sick and wounded who needed all types of supplies—including wines, cordials, and brandy. From his pen flowed two essays printed in the Rome papers. In one of them he admitted that while many forts had fallen to the enemy, God is our "only strong tower; the refuge and strength of the nation." It grieved him to discover that the South was abandoning God by refusing to fast, breaking the Sabbath, swearing, drunkenness, extortion, and financial speculation. He concluded: "While I would not underrate any military preparations, whether of discipline or armament, I believe God's power alone raises an impregnable fortification." In the other article he returned to the topic of high prices, favoring recent action by Congress in controlling the cost of hides and wool and insisting that similar controls should be placed on cotton also. He urged his readers to raise their voices against such extortion, which in his judgment ultimately hurt both soldiers and their families.

The intensity of local feeling concerning slavery and abolitionism is revealed in an 1862 incident involving Charles E. Hills, who had been a deacon for almost two years, Sunday school superintendent for fifteen months, and church clerk for eight. He resigned his positions, "assigning as his cause the assailing of his character as a good and loyal citizen, thereby in his opinion causing injury to the church." His resignation was tabled and an investigation launched. The following month two large pages of the church minutes were

filled with the committee report. Hills had been accused of contributing money to free a slave while in the North, of aiding abolitionist activities in Kansas a number of years before, of being neutral at the opening of the war, and of avoiding conscription. Fully defending him, the committee had discovered that no one could be found supporting the first allegation, that he had never lived in Kansas, that he was now "perfectly satisfied with the justness of our cause" (as were many others initially neutral), and that he had taken a physical examination as a conscript and had been rejected. The committee declared its "confidence in the loyalty and Christian integrity of Bro. Hills," requested him to withdraw his resignation (which he did), and affirmed that "the action of the brethren who signed a petition setting forth these or kindred charges was hurtful and inconsiderate." Soon the committee report was printed in full by the local papers, and Hills was absolved of guilt in the public eye.

While some men left Rome for an extended period of military service, Pastor D. W. Gwin felt justified to leave temporarily as a traveling army evangelist. At the Cherokee Convention meeting in May 1863, he proposed that a committee be appointed "whose duty it shall be to procure the voluntary services of ministers, within our bounds, two of whom shall visit the army in company, for a period of two weeks, or longer, as the committee may arrange." The convention urged the churches "to relinquish the services of their pastors, for the time specified, and to raise special contributions for their support, respectively." Gwin stood among those Southern Baptists who opposed army chaplains paid by the government, feeling that a proper separation of church and state demanded that they be supported only by religious bodies. The church minutes for June record the church's agreement with its pastor's resolution: "In response to the call of the Cherokee Convention for pastoral labor in the Army, it was resolved that this Conference desires our Pastor to comply with the request and that a Committee of three be appointed to procure a supply during his absence and to raise such funds as may be necessary to defray expenses." Later in the conference "it was moved the quarterly collection in July be applied to this object— [and] adopted." During a part of August and September Gwin was in Virginia, where he led "a considerable revival of religion" in one brigade that he visited. One of his auditors wrote to the *Courier*: "He certainly has the good wishes of hundreds who were the recipients of so many favors at his hands." Commenting in the *Banner* on the same event, Gwin said: "Certainly I never witnessed such a revival spirit . . ." His own preaching was so extensive that he lost his voice—and so persuasive that he baptized eight-

een soldiers in one day.

Romans had hailed Southern triumphs at First and Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville, but by 1862 the presence of enemy troops in eastern Tennessee gave them cause for concern. The city received a shock when a proposed raid by A. D. Streight in May of 1863 was narrowly averted. John H. Wisdom, a former Rome Baptist Church member then living in Alabama, warned the community of the enemies' approach, and General Nathan B. Forrest captured them within sight of Rome. Great rejoicing was soon followed by a day of thanksgiving proclaimed by the mayor, and church services expressed appreciation because the foe had been so recently "arrested by the Lord of Hosts." On the wider scene, however, this was soon followed by losses at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga.

Home defense had become an important consideration in mid-1861, after most of the able-bodied younger men left town. A year later the matter was raised again as Stillwell and others signed a notice calling for a public meeting. After Streight's raid, the community was galvanized into action—under the leadership of Alfred Shorter and others—with home guard units formed and fortifications constructed.

As 1863 came to its conclusion, Rome was experiencing what the *Courier* called "a numbness or deadness of the body of society . . ." Only about six stores were still left open, food and other goods were scarce, most farmers were in camp, wagons and teams were in military service, and thievery was rife. A *Courier* reporter observed: "We are *enjoying* the blockade *beautifully* now." When the hospitals were closed and Rome citizens began to flee, a "melancholy air" hung over the almost deserted streets. The doleful church minutes include these sentences, written in February 1864: "In December Bro. Gwin tendered his resignation which the church deferred action upon hoping to retain our Brother. But the proximity of the enemy continued to scatter church & congregation, and Bro. Gwin receiving a call to the Church at Griffin accepted it and immediately entered upon the work. No further action was taken in his case. Efforts were made to secure another pastor but without success. Since January the church doors have been closed and the sacred desk silent. God grant this may not long continue." Three black conferences were held in 1864 to grant letters, but no white conferences occurred until late in 1865. The church was paralyzed as many blacks headed for freedom in Tennessee and most whites headed for safety further south. Lawlessness continued to be a fact of life in the area.

The inevitable came in May 1864 when Federal troops occupied Rome, which soon became an important hospital center and headquarters for a cavalry unit. A diary maintained during this period describes the fate of the community and its churches. "We are a little better than prisoners . . . the Town is being gradually destroyed." Pews from the Presbyterian church were used to float pontoon bridges across the rivers, replacing those burned by retreating Confederate soldiers. Both the Presbyterian and Methodist church buildings became storage depots. The writer continued: "Babtist & Episcopal for Hospitals." A manuscript history of the church written by Mrs. Mamie Headden Kennard about 1954 adds: "The basement of the church was used as a stable for the horses of the officers of the Northern Army."

Late in 1864 the Federal hospitals were taken away and the troops evacuated Rome, burning much of the town but not its churches. When the bank building was destroyed, the church's account books kept by C. O. Stillwell, church treasurer and cashier of the bank, were lost. Slowly the nonmilitary citizens began coming back. Immediately the stragglers and deserters preyed on the area. A nearby pastor wrote the *Index* that the county was "oppressed by roving squads of cavalry who call themselves 'Home Guards.' These are made up principally of deserters and lawless characters, whose prime mission seems to be, to plunder and oppress, and exercise their power." Provisions were scarce and the churches in "a sad state." The few remaining pastors found it necessary either to walk or to face the danger of having their horses stolen. "I sometimes find persons and communities that have not heard a sermon in twelve months." A semblance of city government was restored, and ex-soldiers began to limp home. The newly freed blacks understandably adopted a way of life that rendered them "verry troublesome" and "of verry little value" to the smarting whites who still recalled the past with fondness. A small number of business establishments were reopened, and the newspaper resumed publication in September of 1865. It recorded the events of the summer: "Since the return of some of the refugees, a few scattering pews and seats from the City Hall and other places have been brought together at the Baptist Church, enough to seat, say one hundred and fifty persons, and most of the preaching we have had this past Summer, has been there." The building was in grave disrepair due to ill treatment recently accorded it, but was likely in better condition than any of the other churches in town.

Regular church services and conferences began on October 13, 1865, and a new pastor, James Courtney Browne, was called. Soon

the membership roll was revised, showing that the church then had 121 members, all white— 43 male and 78 female.

### *CONCLUSION*

Three decades before, the Rome Baptist Church had been founded as one of the earliest and smallest churches in Cherokee Georgia. Slowly it had grown to be one of its largest and wealthiest.

Often parochial and paternalistic, it had submerged its black members—a captive, not a transformer, of its sectional culture. Often parochial and shortsighted, it had seldom ventured very far beyond a weak contribution to Christian missions in northwest Georgia. Just before the close of the first thirty-year period in its existence, it had lost its black members and had tentatively moved in the direction of supporting a worldwide Christian witness. Thanks to a civil war that the attitudes and practices of its members had helped to bring forth, the church was severely crippled and—for almost two years—actually moribund. After a defeat begrudgingly acknowledged by its constituents, it assumed a struggling place in an unstable community. Out of apparent death had emerged the halting beginnings of a renewed life, initiating a period of more than a century in which the church has proclaimed the Good News of God's love to persons of all sorts and conditions throughout the world.

APPENDIX: MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROME BAPTIST CHURCH

Year	Whites	Blacks	Total
1835	6	2	8
1836	8*	0*	8*
1837	16*	1*	17*
1838	20*	1*	21*
1839	22*	2*	24*
1840	25*	2*	27*
1841	22*	3*	25*
1842	20*	2*	22
1843	15*	2*	17
1844	29*	3*	32
1845	32*	5*	37*
1846	36*	5*	41
1847	33*	6*	39
1848	50	11	61
1849	73	11	84
1850	96	22	118
1851	113*	27*	140
1852	90*	32*	122
1853	64	38	102
1854	75	44	119
1855	70	38	108
1856	77*	41*	118*
1857	84	44	128
1858	106*	56*	162*
1859	101*	54*	155*
1860	153*	80*	233*
1861	144*	75*	219*
1862	133*	70*	203*
1863	137*	67*	204*
1864	121*	63*	184*
1865	121	0	121

Note: Estimated figures are marked with an asterisk. The precise figures for 1835 are from I. M. Allen, editor, *The Triennial Baptist Register. No. 2. — 1836* (Philadelphia: Baptist General Tract Society, 1836), p. 195. The precise figures for 1865 are from a list compiled by the church clerk in 1866. All other precise figures are from Coosa Baptist Association, *Minutes*.

APPENDIX: BIOGRAPHIES OF PASTORS, ROME BAPTIST CHURCH  
1835-1865

HUGH QUINN

Born York District, South Carolina, 1785. Married Frances Allenson, about 1807; 8 children. Physician and professor in Botonico-Medical College, first in Forsyth, Georgia, and then in Memphis, Tennessee. Joined a Baptist church, 1807. Ordained to the gospel ministry, 1827. Sent from North Carolina as a missionary to Cherokees, about 1827, coming to Missionary Station, Floyd County, Georgia, with his family. Worked with whites, not Indians, after 1838. Led in founding Pisgah Baptist Church, 1833; was a charter member; donated land for its first meetinghouse; pastor from 1833-1846, except for two years. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1835-1836. Trustee, Hearn Academy. Attended Georgia Baptist Convention, 1845. Moderator, Coosa Baptist Association, 1846. Moved to Palo Alto, Mississippi, 1846; pastor of the Baptist church there until his death. Pastor of Holmesville Baptist Church, Holmesville, Mississippi, 1859-1860. Died of cancer, April 23, 1864, at the home of a son, D. A. Quinn, near Palo Alto, Mississippi. *Chief sources: Baptist Banner*, June 4, 1864, p. 1; "Pisgah Baptist Church, 1833-1933; Centennial Celebration, July 30, 1933" (Rome: n.p., 1933).

JOHN CRAWFORD

Born May 11, 1789 (or April 12, 1788), in Greenville District, South Carolina. Farmer, 1803-1804. Moved to Laurens District, South Carolina, 1814. Married Martha Clore, October 10, 1819; 2 daughters, 4 sons. Profession of faith and baptism, 1829 (or 1819), Rocky Mount Baptist Church, Laurens District, South Carolina. Ordained a deacon. Ordained to the gospel ministry, October 1832. Pastor in Laurens District, South Carolina, 1833-1835. Moved near Cassville, Georgia, January 26, 1836, supporting himself as a farmer. Pastor of Cassville Baptist Church, 1836-1858, without pay. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1837, 1839-1840, 1842, probably without pay. Pastor of Oothcaloga, Cartersville, Cedar Creek, Kingston, Cross Road, Raccoon Creek, Oak Grove, New Bethel, and Enon Baptist churches at various times, probably without pay. Moderator, Middle Cherokee Baptist Association, 1847-1853. Attended Georgia Baptist Convention, 1850, 1853, 1855. Prominent in the Cherokee Baptist Convention. Trustee, Cherokee Baptist College, 1853-1857 (president); 1858-1860; 1860-1861, 1862-1863 (president). Trustee, Woodland Female College, 1856-1857. Died of "dropsy of the chest," August 13 (or 12), 1873, in Bartow County. *Chief sources: Samuel Boykin, History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia* (Atlanta: Jas. P. Harrison & Co., 1881), Biographical Compendium, pp. 152-153; *Christian Index and South-Western Baptist*, September 18, 1873, p. 8; November 20, 1873, p. 8.

WILLIAM WOOD

Lived at Cave Spring. Pastor of Cave Spring Baptist Church, 1838-1842, 1844. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1838. Attended Georgia Baptist Convention, 1841-1843. Pastor (and also perhaps a member) of Cedartown Baptist Church, 1842. Pastor of Vans Valley Baptist Church, Floyd County, 1843. Moved to Spring Place, 1845. Moved to Medicinal Springs, Walker County, 1846. Moved to Summerville, 1847. Clerk, Coosa Baptist Association, 1847. Preached at Coosa Baptist Association, 1848. Perhaps served on ordaining council at Campbellton Baptist Church, 1853.

HUMPHREY POSEY

Born January 12, 1780, in Henry County, Virginia. Moved with family to Burke

County, North Carolina, 1785. Educated at home, with no formal training. Teacher in Greenville District, South Carolina, 1797-1799; in Union District, South Carolina, 1799-1804. Married Lettice Jolly of Union District, South Carolina, January 28, 1800; 8 daughters, 2 sons; his wife died June 22, 1842, in Walker County, Georgia. Baptized by a Baptist church in Union District, South Carolina, June 11, 1802; licensed to preach by that church, 1803. Teacher in Buncombe County, North Carolina, 1804-1805. Ordained to the gospel ministry in Buncombe County, North Carolina, 1805; pastor of churches in that area, 1805-1817. Missionary preacher and educator among Cherokee Indians of western North Carolina and northwest Georgia, appointed by Triennial Convention, 1817-1824. Moved to Georgia, 1824. Present at formation of Georgia Baptist Convention, 1822; also attended the convention in 1835-1840, 1842-1846; preached, 1840, 1845. Pastor of churches in Carnesville and LaGrange. Moved to Walker County, Georgia, about 1826. Pastor of Wood Station (Walker County), Spring Place (Murray County), and other Baptist churches. Part-time missionary in northwest Georgia, employed by Georgia Baptist Convention, 1843-1845. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1843-1844. Moderator of Coosa Baptist Association, 1842-1844. Present at formation of Southern Baptist Convention, 1845. Agent for and trustee of Hearn Manual Labor School. Agent for Mercer University. Married Mrs. Jane Stokes of Newnan, Georgia, July 28, 1844, and moved to Newnan. Pastor of churches near Newnan, 1844-1846. Died December 28, 1846, and buried near Newnan. *Chief sources:* Boykin, *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, Biographical Compendium, pp. 430-432; William Cathcart, editor, *The Baptist Encyclopaedia* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), II, 928; *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), II, 1099; Robert Fleming, *Sketch of the Life of Elder Humphrey Posey* . . . (Newnan, Georgia: Western Baptist Association of Georgia, 1852).

#### JAMES H. B. SHACKELFORD

Charter member (not pastor) of Albany Baptist Church, 1840-1842. Lived in Cassville, 1844-1848. Listed in Coosa Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1844, 1846-1847, 1855. Ordained to the gospel ministry by 1844. Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church (Cass County), 1846; of New Providence Baptist Church (Gordon County), 1855. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1845-1846. Lived in Oothcaloga, 1848-1857. Listed in Middle Cherokee Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1848-1864, as pastor of various churches. Instrumental in reorganizing Woodland Female College, Cedartown, 1854. Trustee, Cherokee Baptist College, Cassville, 1856-1857, 1859-1861. Attended Georgia Baptist Convention, 1856, 1858. Lived in Calhoun, 1857-1864. Pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church (Chattooga County), one year. Agent for *Landmark Banner and Cherokee Baptist* and Cherokee Baptist College, 1860. Moderator, Cherokee Baptist Convention, 1862. Proprietor, Calhoun Hotel, 1863. Moved to Albany, 1864. Listed in Bethel Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1866-1868, 1870-1871, not as pastor; delegate from Albany Baptist Church, 1866. Moved to plantation in Redbone, Lee County, about 1873. Served on ordaining council, Lee County, May 25, 1873. Moved back to Albany, 1879, his wife having recently died. Preached a revival in Cumming, 1883. Listed in Hightower Baptist Association, *Minutes*, 1884, as living in Cumming. Died, perhaps about 1892, perhaps near Gainesville.

#### EDWIN DYER

Born November 7, 1806, Saltville, Virginia. Married Nancy Austin in Gwinnett County, Georgia, March 25, 1830; 3 daughters, 4 sons. Lived in Social Circle, Georgia, 1830-1837. Attended Georgia Baptist Convention, 1834, 1836-1838, 1840, 1842-1844, 1847-1850, 1852-1853, 1855-1856, 1859, 1864, 1867. Pastor of Monroe Baptist Church. Strong advocate of temperance and missions. Moved to LaFayette, Georgia, 1840. Pastor of LaFayette Baptist Church, 1840-1854, 1857-1862—21 years.

Pastor of other nearby Baptist churches: Grove Level (Chattooga County), 1843; Shiloh (Walker County), 1843; Summerville, 1843, 1849-1850; Cedartown, 1845; Cave Spring, 1845-1847, 1850; Chattooga (Walker County), 1846; Waterville, 1849-1853; Macedonia (Walker County), 1852-1854; Union Pea Vine, 1853-1854, 1857; Chattanooga. Moderator of Coosa Baptist Association, 1840, 1847-1857, 1861; active in many phases, 1840-1864. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1847-1848. Moderator of Cherokee Baptist Convention, 1860; vice-moderator, 1854. Agent for Cherokee Baptist College, 1854; trustee, 1853-1857, 1858-1861. Trustee, Woodland Female College, 1854-1857. Attended Southern Baptist Convention, 1855. Surveyor, builder, stockholder of Chattanooga, Rome, and Columbus Railroad (now branch of Central of Georgia). Moved to Arkansas, about 1864. Pastor of Baptist church at Mountain Home, Arkansas. Died in 1876 at Breckenridge, Texas, at home of a nephew, John Dyer. *Chief sources*: Exa Shahan Neal and Addie Augusta Wert, *History of First Baptist Church, LaFayette, Georgia* (n.p. : n.p., 1962), pp. 14-26; Elizabeth Ann Wright, "James Dyer Descendants and Allied Families" (7-page typewritten manuscript, copyrighted 1954; copy in Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia).

#### CHARLES HARDEN STILLWELL

Born May 24, 1806, in Savannah, Georgia. Very little formal education. Baptized by Savannah Baptist Church, May 7, 1827. Married to Mary Marshall of Augusta, Georgia, July 1832; 13 children. Moved to Monticello, Georgia. Ordained to the gospel ministry by Monticello Baptist Church, August 1837. Preached in that section, 1837-1840. Pastor full-time in Talbot County, 1840-1848, half-time, 1849; Liberty Hill, Mount Zion, and Mount Vernon Baptist churches. Clerk of Columbus Baptist Association 8 years. Attended Georgia Baptist Convention, 1841, 1847-1848, 1850, 1853, 1855-1856, 1873, 1877-1878; assistant clerk, 1853. Present at formation of Southern Baptist Convention, 1845. Clerk of Court of Ordinary, Talbot County, 5 years. Moved to Rome, 1849. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1849-1855. Clerk of Coosa Baptist Association, 1849-1856, 1867-1870. Pastor of nearby Baptist churches: Friendship, 1850; Cave Spring, 1851-1856; Pisgah, 1855. Clerk of Cherokee Baptist Convention, 1854-1856. Helped reorganize Woodland Female College, 1854; trustee, 1854-1855 (secretary), 1855-1857, 1858-1859. Trustee, Cherokee Baptist College, 1856-1857. Resigned as pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1855, because of partial paralysis. Supplied frequently at Rome Baptist Church, 1857-1861. Superintendent and cashier of Rome Railroad, 1856-1864. Secretary, Rome Mutual Insurance Company, 1860-1862. Secretary, Floyd County Salt Manufacturing Company, 1862. Secretary and treasurer of Memphis Branch Railroad 3 years. Left Rome briefly in 1865 because of Civil War. Pastor, Sandersville Baptist Church, 1865. Returned to Rome after war. Agent, Southern Express Company, 1865. Pastor at Kingston, Friendship, Pleasant Valley, and Pisgah Baptist churches, part-time. Clerk, Cave Spring Baptist Association, 1870-1873, 1877-1880. Missionary under Home Mission Board or Georgia Baptist Convention in northwest Georgia, 1870-1881. Clerk of board of commissioners of roads and revenues, from 1873 until his resignation when he refused to sign a license to sell alcoholic beverages. Author of numerous articles in the *Christian Index*, the *Landmark Banner and Cherokee Baptist*, and Rome newspapers. Closing years spent in retirement because of declining health. Died September 10, 1887, in Rome. *Chief sources*: Boykin, *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, Biographical Compendium, pp. 501-502; *Christian Index*, October 6, 1887, p. 15; Georgia Baptist Convention, *Minutes*, 1888, p. 29.

#### SHALER GRANBY HILLYER

Born June 20, 1809, Wilkes County, Georgia. Moved near Athens with family, 1821. Graduated from University of Georgia, 1829. Tutor in Florida, 1829-1830.

Read law in Athens, 1830-1831; admitted to bar in Athens, August 1831. Baptized by Athens Baptist Church, 1831. Principal of academy at Sunbury, Liberty County, and occasional preacher in the area, 1831-1832. Teacher in Girls' High School, Athens, and occasional preacher in the area, 1833. Tutor of languages, University of Georgia, 1834-1835. Ordained to the gospel ministry by Cabin Creek Baptist Church, Jackson County, August 16, 1835. Attended Georgia Baptist Convention, 1835, 1838-1839, 1842-1843, 1845, 1849-1853, 1855-1858, 1860-1863, 1867, 1869-1870, 1872-1878, 1880-1887, 1889-1890; introductory sermon, 1843, 1852, 1877. Principal of male academy, Athens, 1835-1837. Pastor of Cabin Creek Baptist Church, 1836; quarter-time pastor of Athens Baptist Church, 1836-1837. Married to Elizabeth J. Thompson, December 1, 1836; 4 children. Trustee, Mercer University, 1838-1847. Pastor of Milledgeville Baptist Church, 1838-1844; quarter-time pastor of Macon Baptist Church for 2 years; principal for 4-1/2 years of Scottsboro Female College, where he then lived. Principal of Penfield Female Seminary, 1845. Present at formation of Southern Baptist Convention, 1845; also attended the convention in 1855. 1877. 1879, 1882, 1885. Death of wife; personal poor health; resigned Penfield Female Seminary later in 1845. Traveled several months to restore his health, 1845-1846. Pastor at Madison half-time, at Athens half-time, 1846. Married Elizabeth T. Dagg, 1846; 7 children. Professor of belles-lettres, Mercer University, 1847-1856. Received honorary Doctor of Divinity degree, Mercer University, 1850. Pastor of Bethesda Baptist Church (Greene County), 1850-1855; White Plains Baptist Church, 1851-1852. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1856-59; bought farm (named it "Lindisfarn") 3 miles from Rome on Oostanula River for his family and about 20 slaves; conducted girls' school for part of this time (with a few younger male students too). Executive committee, Cherokee Baptist Convention, 1858-1860. Trustee, Cherokee Baptist College, 1858-1860. Trustee, Woodland Female College, 1856-1857, 1858-1859. Professor of theology and chaplain, Mercer University, 1859-1862; university closed because of the war. Pastor at Penfield, 1859; at Crawfordsville, 1859-1862. Principal of Hearn School and Cave Spring Female Seminary, 1862-1863; schools closed because of the war; pastor of Cave Spring Baptist Church, 1863; lived at Lindisfarn briefly; sold it; bought farm near Cave Spring; sold it also. Escaped to southwest Georgia; purchased plantation in Mitchell County, 12 miles south of Albany (named it "Ravenswood"); pastor of Albany Baptist Church, 1863. Pastor of Gum Pond Baptist Church; ran plantation; taught in small school nearby; supported wife, 5 daughters, 3 sons; 1866-1867. Pastor of Forsyth Baptist Church, 1867-1881; president and professor at Monroe Female College, 1867-1871; professor, 1872-1879; temporary president and professor, 1880-1881. Death of second wife, January 31, 1870. Married Mrs. William Lawton of South Carolina, mid-1871. Editorial contributor to the *Christian Index*, 1877-1878. Pastor of Washington Baptist Church, 1881-1887. Death of third wife, December 1886. Lived with daughter Louisa C. Hillyer in Decatur, 1886-1889, and in Atlanta, 1889-1900. Pastor of Macedonia and Clarkston Baptist churches. Wrote for *Christian Index* and *Religious Herald* (Richmond, Virginia), 1888-1900. Author of *Manual of Bible Morality* (Richmond: B. F. Johnson Publishing Co., 1897). Author of *Reminiscences of Georgia Baptists* (Atlanta: Foote & Davies Company, 1902). Died February 19, 1900; buried at Forsyth. *Chief sources*: Boykin, *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, Biographical Compendium, pp. 264-266; Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopaedia*, I, 526; *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, I, 608; Louisa C. Hillyer, "The Story of Shaler Granby Hillyer," in Shaler Granby Hillyer, *Reminiscences of Georgia Baptists*, pp. 259-294; Eugenia Wootton Stone, *Yesterday at Tift* (Doraville, Georgia: Foote & Davies, 1969), pp. 16-19.

#### DAVID WILLIAM GWIN

Born December 6, 1838, Bridgewater, Virginia. Moved to Alexandria, Virginia, with family, 1853. Baptized by First Baptist Church, Alexandria, 1854. Attended Richmond College, 1855-1859; graduated, 1859. Studied law, 1859. Taught school in

Virginia and Knoxville, Georgia, 1860. Professor of ancient languages, Brownwood Institute, LaGrange, Georgia, 1861. Pastor of Rome Baptist Church, 1861-1863. Ordained to the gospel ministry by the Rome Baptist Church, November 3, 1861. Married Jennie Crawford Howell of Nashville, Tennessee, October 13, 1863 (second daughter of R. B. C. Howell). Attended Georgia Baptist Convention, 1863-1864, 1866-1868, 1877-1879, 1881, 1883-1884, 1894-1897, 1900, 1902, 1904-1906; assistant clerk, 1866. Pastor of Griffin Baptist Church, 1864-1868. Attended Southern Baptist Convention, 1866, 1868, 1872-1884, 1886, 1891-1899, 1901, 1903, 1906-1910. Established Griffin High School, 1867; taught for 18 months. Pastor of First Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama, 1868-1876. Trustee, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1872-1881. Helped reestablish *Alabama Baptist*, 1873; wrote many articles for it. Trustee, Howard College. Received honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Alabama State College, 1874; from University of Alabama, 1875. Pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, 1876-1884. Moderator, Stone Mountain Baptist Association, 1878. Member of state mission board, Georgia Baptist Convention. Pastor, Sylvester Baptist Church, Sylvester, Georgia, 1883-1884, 1895-1897. Pastor in Virginia, 1885-1893. Lived in Atlanta, 1894-1909, 1913-1915; in Nashville, 1911-1912; in Smithfield and Richmond, Virginia, 1910, 1916-1920. Died 1920 in Smithfield, Virginia. *Chief sources*: James L. Baggott, *Biographies of Atlanta Baptist Ministers, 1846-1966* (Decatur, Georgia: Dosh and Gibbs, Co., n.d.), p. 83; Boykin, *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, Biographical Compendium, pp. 239-241; Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopaedia*, I, 482.

## SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Principal primary sources consulted in the preparation of this essay are as follows: Rome Baptist Church manuscript minutes, 1835-1865; Rome newspapers, 1850-1852, 1860-1865, on microfilm at Carnegie Library, Rome, Georgia; Diary of Reuben S. Norton, on microfilm at Carnegie Library and a typed copy in the possession of Roger Aycock of Rome; Floyd County Books of Deeds, vols. H and N; *Landmark Banner and Cherokee Baptist* (later *Banner and Baptist*, *Baptist Banner*), 1859-1865; published minutes of the Coosa Baptist Association, the Cherokee Baptist Convention, the Georgia Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention; catalogues of the Woodland Female College and Cherokee Baptist College; the *Christian Index*, 1835-1865, on microfilm at Mercer University; the *Tennessee Baptist*, 1854-1862, on microfilm at Dargan-Carver Library, Nashville, Tennessee; the *Religious Herald*, 1861-1863, on microfilm at the University of Richmond, Virginia; the *Confederate Baptist*, 1862-1863, on microfilm at Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina.

Many of the principal secondary sources are listed in the biographies of pastors in the appendix. Others are as follows: Robert A. Baker, *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1607-1972* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1974); George M. Battey, Jr., *A History of Rome and Floyd County* (Atlanta: Webb and Vary Company, 1922); "The Centennial of Saint Peter's Church, Rome, Georgia, 1844-1944" (n.p.: n.p., 1944); Walter Cochran, "A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Rome, Georgia" (n.p.: n.p., 1948); Wade B. Gassman, "A History of Rome and Floyd County, Georgia in the Civil War" (M.A. thesis, Emory University, 1966); Walter P. Jones, "A History of the First Methodist Church of Rome, Georgia, 1840-1951" (n.p.: n.p., 1951); B. D. Ragsdale, *Story of Georgia Baptists*, 3 volumes (Atlanta: Foote and Davies Co., 1932-1938); J. A. Sartain, *History of the Coosa Baptist Association* (n.p.: n.p., 1936); *Viewpoints: Georgia Baptist History*, II (1969), III (1972), IV (1974).

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A completely documented version of this essay is available at the First Baptist Church, Rome, Georgia.

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Robert G. Gardner