

**Alabama Henderson's  
and their  
Greene County Churches**

## **Foreward**

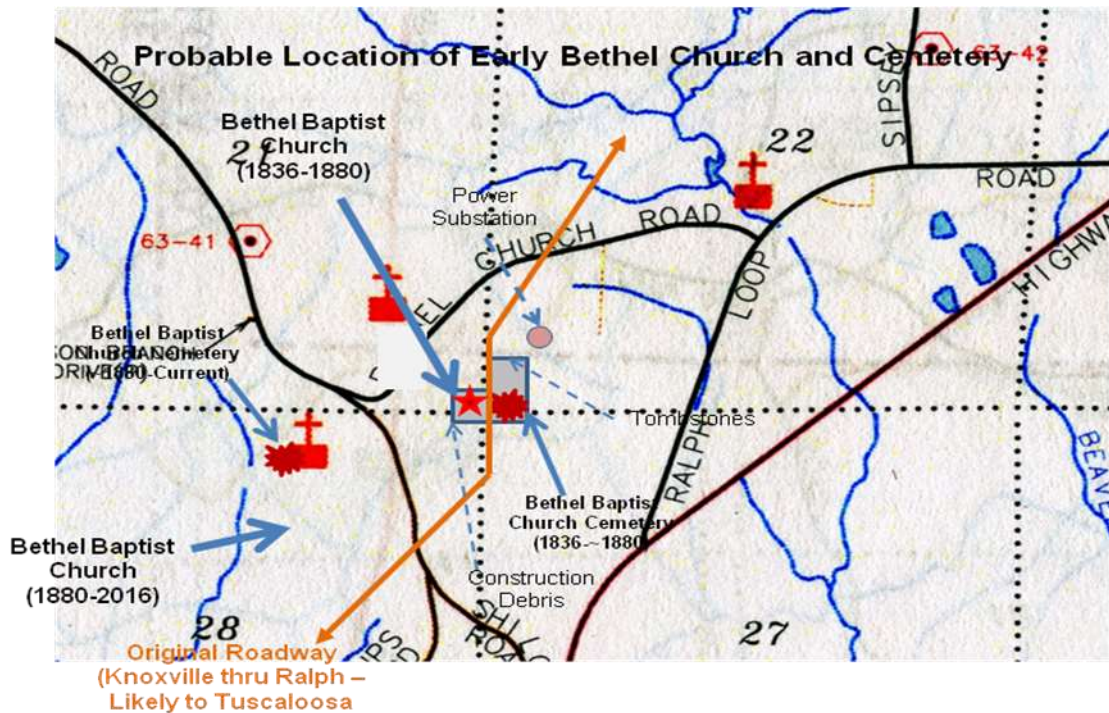
The "Alabama Hendersons" have had a close relationship with four churches near where they settled in Greene County, Alabama for at least six generations. These churches (and their associated cemeteries) are:

- a) Bethel Baptist Church near Ralph, Alabama
- b) Beulah Baptist Church near Snoddy, Alabama
- c) Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church near Pleasant Ridge, Alabama
- d) Hebron Presbyterian Church near Mantua, Alabama

# **Bethel Baptist Church**

**Ralph, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama**

**Bethel Baptist Church** was organized on 10 May 1834 by 32 former members of the Grants Creek Baptist Church. In the early 1830s, two Baptist Churches (Grant's Creek and Buck Creek) were organized in the vicinity of Ralph, AL. Apparently, there were not enough members to sustain Grant's Creek Church which was located north of Ralph near Prosper. As a result, the two congregations agreed to merge and reorganized as Bethel Baptist Church. This original Bethel Baptist Church site was located (in the local schoolhouse) south of Bethel Church Road about 200 yards down the hill from the current intersection of Bethel Church Road and Shiloh Road. Roadbed for the original 'superhighway' between Tuscaloosa and Eutaw passed through Ralph, Bethel church property, and Knoxville. The original Bethel Baptist Church property consisted of three 1-acre plots (each 210 feet on a side) with two plots arranged in a N-S orientation east of the old road and the third plot (with church building) was situated on west side of this old roadbed. The Bethel Church Cemetery was located on the NE section of the church property as illustrated in the following drawing.



Things we know:

- 1) Per Mr Jacobs, the Knoxville-Tuscaloosa Road passed through the area as indicated. The actual road was NOT straight.
- 2) We know that northern edge of the old cemetery was cut by newer Bethel Church Road.
- 3) Per Mr Jacobs, the original deed was for three 1-acre blocks (~210 ft per side) arranged as depicted.
- 4) The distance between intersection of Bethel Church Road & Shiloh Road and the tombstones is ~200 Yards.

Things we Assume:

- 1) Church building was located adjacent to the road.
- 2) Spacing seems to imply that church building and cemetery were on opposite sides of the road.

Per local newspaper article, the original Bethel Baptist Church building was destroyed by a tornado in 1856. The structure was rebuilt within two years and church services continued until about 1880 - based on dates of tombstones in the current Bethel cemetery. At that point, the

church likely found itself on a dead-end dirt lane on the side of a steep hill when the original Shiloh Road was opened. As a result, the Church members decided to relocate both the Church Building and its Cemetery to their current location atop summit of Bethel Hill. The original Cemetery was used for burials between 1836 and ~1880 before the site was abandoned and is now covered by heavy forest. Given the rate of burials in early 1900s in Bethel Cemetery, there were likely 100+ interments in this original Bethel Cemetery between 1836 and 1880. However, its acidic soil severely eroded most of its tombstones. George believes that five of Ann's grandparents are buried in this old Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery.

Nine (9) of Ann's grandparents are believed buried in the two Bethel Baptist Church Cemeteries to include:

- \* **"Widow Henderson"** - Mother of William Franklin Henderson (7.1)
  - buried in Old Cemetery
  
- \* **Benjamin Waller Stephens** (Agness' father) and **Margaret Wardlaw** (7.5)
  - both were buried in Old Cemetery
  
- \* **William Franklin Henderson and Agness R. Stephens** (6.1)
  - Agness was buried in Old Cemetery; tombstone relocated after 1890
  
- \* **Benjamin Stephens and Lydia Maria Briggs** (6.3)
  
- \* **James Benjamin Stephens and Josephine Drummond** (5.2)
  - James was buried in Old Cemetery



According to this sign, there have been three Bethel Church Buildings located on the current site atop Bethel Hill as follows:

- 1) Building # 1: Used between 1880 and 1907 when it was replaced by a larger structure. Thus far we do not have a picture of this first church building.
- 2) Building #2: See photo below. This Church Building was used between 1907 and 1977 when it burned after being struck by lightning
- 3) Building #3: See photo below. This brick Church Building is still being used by its members as of 2016.



(Built in 1907, this building was struck by lightning and burned in 1977. This photo is of a picture hanging in Robertson's Cafe in Ralph, AL as of Jan2016. Existing Church Building was rebuilt on current site atop summit of Bethel Hill.)



Bethel Baptist Church (circa 2015)





Inside Bethel Baptist Church (Feb2016)



Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery (c2015)



Note: **Agness Robinson Stephens** (1818-1873), as well as four other grandparents of Ann Ella (Henderson) Collier were are buried in Old Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery. However, Agness' tombstone lies flat on the ground (and mostly buried) beside her husband's (William Franklin Henderson 1811-1890) tombstone. (Note: George has photo of Agness' eroded tombstone from the 1990s when it was standing vertically near William's tombstone.) Burials were occurring in the current Bethel Cemetery after about 1880 (e.g., J.Z. Henderson in 1888) while sign erected by Alabama Historical Association indicates that a larger structure was built in 1907.

George's hypothesis:

1) Seven (7) individuals (including **Agness R Stephens**) whose tombstones are in Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery that have dates earlier than 1880 were actually buried in the Old Bethel Cemetery. These seven tombstones (but probably not the graves) were relocated to their current location sometime after 1890. For example, notice how bottom of Agness' tombstone has been completely eroded while remainder of inscription has remained legible. That erosion occurred prior to relocation of the tombstone - the soil in the old cemetery is very acidic and would have eroded her tombstone within a few decades.

2) Seven tombstones were relocated about the same time as indicated by clustering shown in the following photo.



Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery  
(Tombstones with deaths prior to 1880)

During March 2015 visit, George also took photo of tombstones for the following persons buried at Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery who are likely to be distant cousins of Ann Ella Henderson:

1. Cartee  
Johnnie E Cartee (27Aug1882-25Apr1930)  
Martha Cartee (21Oct1856-7Oct1915)  
W.T. Cartee (25Jul1849-11Aug1922)  
W.G. Cartee (6Jun1885-5Apr1928)  
Joe Cartee (26Dec1916-24Jan1934)
2. Cockrell (surname of Cynthia Henderson's husband)  
Tom W. Cockrell (1859-29Dec1911)  
Geneva E Cockrell (14Apr186x-1Jul1925)  
Willie Ann Cockrell (3Dec1886-22Aug1896)
3. Henderson  
Nannie W Henderson (3Apr1882-11Aug1956)  
George W Henderson (3Apr1882-29Ju1967)  
Lillie C Henderson (19May1881-13Oct1916)  
Maude Henderson (19Oct1887-14Dec1958)  
James E Henderson (28Mar1884-30Mar1957)  
J. Z. Henderson (22Aug1850-16Apr1888)  
Stella H Henderson (30Apr1893-2Feb1985)  
Ross G Henderson (30Sep1894-1Mar1934)
- 4.. Lamb  
Edna L Lamb (7Feb1884-4Oct1963)  
James A Lamb (a Mason) (6Oct1875-17Sep1941)  
Mildred E Lamb (6Oct1918-9Jun1919)
5. Stephens  
Nannie Kate Stephens (28Aug1914-1918) - dau D.W. & M.P. Stephens  
Minnie P Stephens (19Jul1890-2Jul1918) - wife of D.W.  
Minnie Luc... Stephens (1809-190x)  
Willie T Stephens (8May1889-1967)  
Bessie Stephens Tingle (24Apr1903-8Apr1987)

# **Beulah Baptist Church**

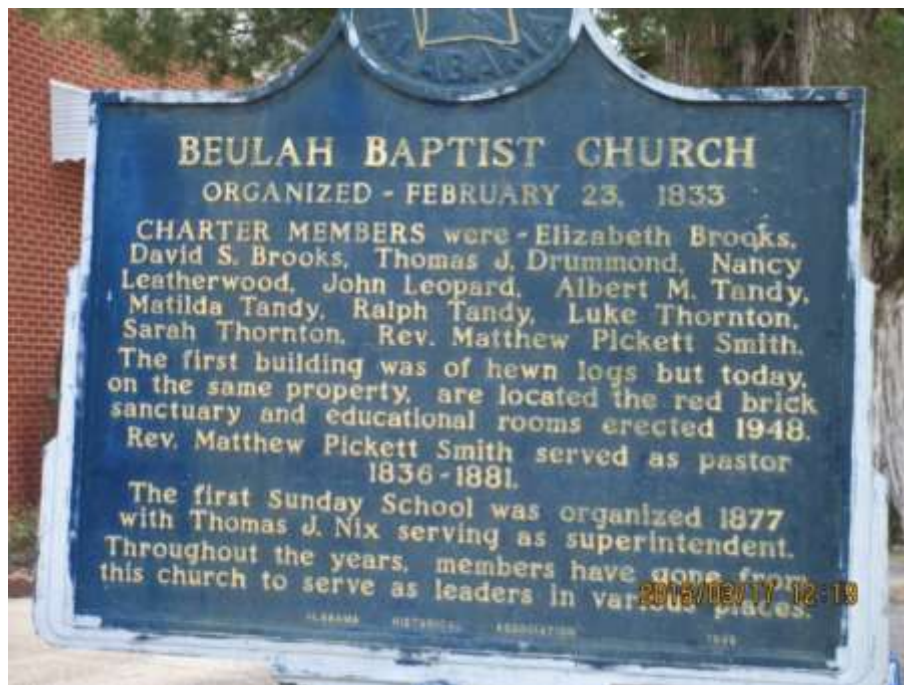
Snoddy Community

6496 County Road 213  
Mantua, Greene County, AL

The settlers who migrated from the Carolinas, Virginia, and Georgia had received grants of land for their military service during the Revolutionary War. Tradition says that a group set out for the "new western territory" that had been opened up with the removal of the Indians. Some of the known settlers who received land grants were Drummond, Smith, William Bonds, and Luke and Elisha Thornton. Most of the settlers in this area were planters, farmers, and merchants.

Beulah was the name given to the church that was established in 1833. Located about a mile west of the church was a gin, a store, and a stagecoach stop. The stagecoach stop was named Snoddy for a family by that name. Beulah Academy was established in 1859 and was a 3-room school whose students attended through the eighth grade. It was built on land donated by James Washington Burnett and his wife Lenora Thornton Burnett.

There was no provision for heating until 1884 when a stove was purchased. The roads were little more than trails and became impassable in the winter. Loneliness was a problem and church became a way for young people to gather to court and frolic. However, church meetings clearly show congregation's intolerance for those who drank, danced, or played cards.



**Edmund Waller Henderson** was an ordained deacon and became a member 1877 by letter from Bethel Baptist Church (Ralph, Alabama). Edmund was church clerk 1893-1899.

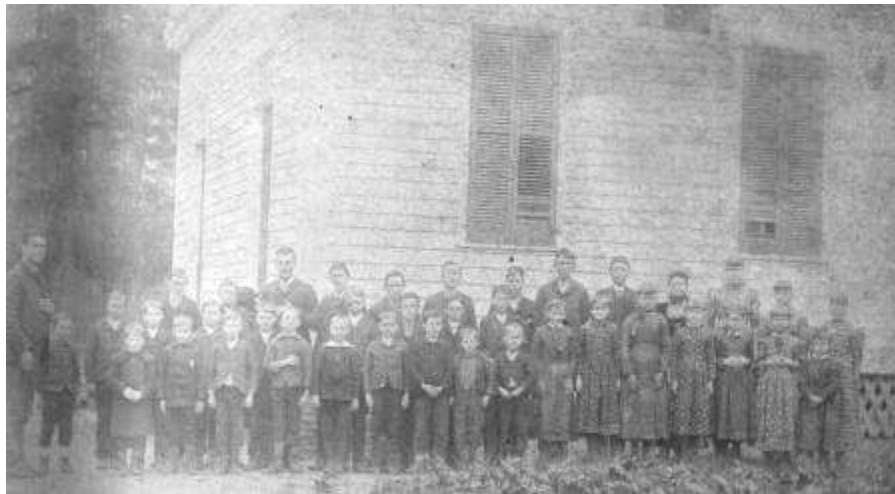


*Beulah Church circa 1920*



Beulah Baptist Church (circa 1948)

**Per Milton Henderson's Research in 1990s:** Beulah Baptist Church, was organized 23Feb1833, the Church has had four (4) buildings. The first structure was erected in 1872 as a wood structure. Milton Henderson was been told that his Great Uncle Jim Henderson, James Edmund Henderson, a carpenter among other trades, "turned the Church around". According to Jim Roebuck of Tuscaloosa, AL, his grandfather (i.e., James Henderson) turned the inside of the church around so that the pulpit/stage was at the opposite end of the auditorium from the entrance. James was quoted as saying "... this will be better for funerals." According to Jim Roebuck's mother "... it is so sad that James was the first funeral to use the new arrangement.



Beulah Baptist Church also functioned as the local School House (c1899)





Beulah Baptist Church (c2015) - Building completed in 1948



Interior View of Bethel Baptist Church (Oct2016)



Following is an excerpt from program associated with **150th anniversary celebration** of the Beulah Baptist Church which was held in 1983. Snoddy was a station for the exchange of horses on one of the old stage lines. During the 1840's this section was added to Greene County to become a Northeast corner and was included in the Union Voting District. It was an area of small farms and small slave holders. The land was red clay with pine and other timber in abundance. The farms while small were productive. The slaves did not outnumber the white population. The size of farms and the number of slaves were increasing until 1860.

The first building for Beulah Baptist Church was of hewn logs, but today on the same property, are located the red brick sanctuary and educational rooms which were erected in 1948.

Rev. Matthew Pickett served as pastor 1836-1881.

The first Sunday School was organized 1877 with Thomas J. Nix serving as superintendent.

After the Revolutionary War, people began to move West. Those settlers from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia moved into the Southwest. The defeat of the Indians and the consequent land cessions accelerated the migration. The invention of the cotton gin and the development of a high land variety of cotton sent thousands of people in this area seeking new cotton lands. The Union was growing and as people moved into the Southwest they moved and brought their beliefs, ideals, religions, and morals with them. In the States on the Seaboard South, the Episcopal Church was the established Church.

During the early years there were several nationwide revivals of religion, one of which is known as the "great awakening". These revivals were emotional in their appeal bringing religion to the great masses of people on the levels they understood. Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians grew in great numbers, churches were organized and set in order almost as soon as the houses were built and the land cleared.

The settlers were usually very religious, such a group were those who left Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia to settle in an area known officially as Snoddy, but later called the Beulah Community.

A Christian group of people in the Snoddy community felt the need of a church so on February 23, 1833, a Presbytery consisting of the Reverend Robert Marsh, the Reverend Silas Dobbs and the Reverend William B. Stansel, examined and found orthodox the following which they constituted into a regular Baptist Church of Christ: Ralph Tandy, Matilda Tandy, Albert M. Tandy, Luke Thornton, Sarah Thornton, Matthew P. Smith, John Leopard, **T. J. Drummond**, David Brooks, Elizabeth Brooks and Mary Leatherwood.

After constituting of the Church, Reverend Marsh was elected Moderator, Ralph Tandy and Matthew P. Smith having already been ordained were chosen Deacons. The name Beulah was selected.

The first sermon was preached on April 27, 1833 by a Mr. Taylor. The text from Luke 19:6-10, "And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully". During the business meeting,

“Articles of Faith” and “Rules of Decorum” were drawn up as governing principles for the Church. Articles of Faith are Baptist Beliefs with Calvinistic teaching. Strict rules of discipline were followed and the Ordinance of the Lord’s Supper was observed twice a year.

All members were required to attend Lord's Supper twice a year and were required to attend regular preaching services, or show why. Baptists were the most numerous denomination in Alabama from early days. The Baptist Churches were independent democratic units.

Twelve (12) of Ann Ella's grandparents are believed to be buried at Beulah Cemetery to include:

- \* **Thomas James and Isabel Drummond** (7.7) - Charter Member
- \* **Joseph Cartee and Sarah Lamb** (6.2)
- \* **David Thomas and Mary Drummond** (6.4)
- \* **Edmund Waller and Eliza Henderson** (5.1)
- \* **John C and Lydia Henderson** (4.1)
- \* **Thomas Legg and Jeannetta Nully** (8.14)

George learned several unique features of Beulah Baptist Church and its Cemetery to include:

- 1) Twelve (12) of Ann Ella's grandparents over five generations are buried in Beulah Cemetery.
- 2) George was surprised to see the number of 'tombstones' distributed throughout the cemetery which are obviously not the ones installed when the burial was performed. There may be as many as 100 tombstones which have been replaced with a stone memorial which does not easily erode.
- 3) Bethel Baptist Church had a baptistry which was installed outdoors. The church minutes refer to Edmund Waller Henderson being tasked to repair it. The baptistry looked similar to a rectangular above-ground pool with a wooden structure around it.
- 4) For the first several decades of its existence, the Beulah Baptist Church was integrated in that it had both white and black members. George was told that a significant number of black members are buried in the Bethel Cemetery in the southern front quadrant of the cemetery. There are currently 5-6 small tombstones in that area but no one is certain whether they were for white or black burials. See photo below which shows area where black members were buried near the trees.



Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery  
(Oct2016 - As viewed from south side of the Church)

Directions to Beulah Church and Cemetery located near Snoddy, AL are as follows:

- Starting with Tuscaloosa, AL, take I-20/59 west from Tuscaloosa for 19-20 miles.
- Take Exit 52 (Hwy 11/43 and Knoxville, AL) and head north on US 11.
- Follow US11 north approximately 300 yards. Note that the only business remaining at this interstate exit (as of 2016) is a gas station which is located on your right.
- Turn left on Hwy 220 (a paved road) until it dead-ends after 7.9 miles. See sign below.
- Turn left at intersection onto Hwy 213 and go ~0.4 mile to Beulah Church and Cemetery.



Per Mr James Roebuck of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, there is an interesting view if one looks westward while standing behind Beulah Church. Without tree obstructions, one could see the original William Franklin Henderson homestead located in nearby. All of the Henderson

buildings are gone but there are still a few of the original families (e.g., Drummond) who live in the Snoddy community. George met one of these Drummond descendants during a visit in February 2016 - she lives ~1 mile east from the Snoddy intersection. This lady showed George the framed original land patent which her GGGrandfather **Thomas J Drummond** (& a 2nd person) purchased from the U.S. Government. Note: In the 1990s, Milton Henderson retrieved and kept a 10-pound rock and piece of wood which came from the Henderson home located on the property - which is now heavily wooded. Incidentally, the original homestead settled by **William Franklin Henderson** is adjacent to the farm on which this Drummond descendant lived.

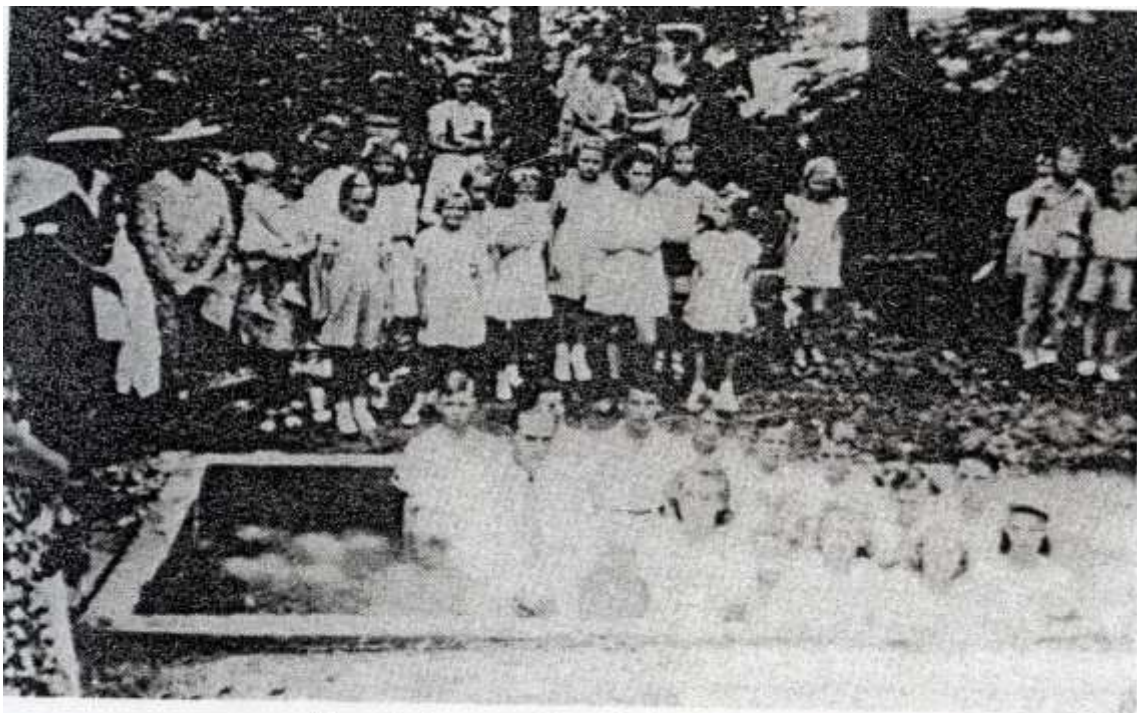
### **Notes from the Beulah Baptist Church Meeting Minutes (1833-2016)**

In August 2016, George learned that a historical researcher in Eutaw, Alabama had paid to digitize and transcribe ALL minutes of the Beulah Baptist Church congregation since its inception in 1833. He was fortunate enough to obtain a copy of these 600+ pages of minutes. Following are interesting notes which George took from the minutes which covered the first 75 years of the Church existence.

- 1) I find amazing the degree to which the Church congregation was able to influence the behavior of its individual members. Disputes between members, dancing, cards, etc were indiscretions which would get one expelled from the congregation. However, confession and a promise to do better were usually enough to avoid expulsion. It is not clear what the practical effect in one's daily life would be if you were not a member of the congregation or had been expelled. For example, there is no mention of **William or Agness Henderson** in the church minutes - we know they lived nearby but attended Bethel Baptist Church. Further, there is minimal mention of Bethel Baptist Church in the minutes.
- 2) Beulah Church accepted black members from its earliest days. Apparently, their first building had a walled partition down middle of the church such that whites and blacks did not see each other during worship service. The minutes talk about removing at least part of the wall.
- 3) The church met monthly - apparently they had business meeting on Saturday and Church on Sunday. They initially met on 4th weekend but changed to 3rd weekend within a couple of years. It was near 1860 before they began paying the preacher and having preaching twice monthly.
- 4) Minutes talk about a book with list of membership. It would be most interesting to see a complete list of membership from some of those early years. It would be very difficult to reconstruct a list of members based on these meeting minutes. Note: George visited Special Collections Section of Samford University Library (in Birmingham) in October 2016 but was unable to find any additional information regarding early Beulah Baptist Church.
- 5) The church participated in both District and Association meetings - the church even purchased minutes of those meetings.

- 6) **Thomas J Drummond** (one of Ann's ancestors) was listed as a charter member of Beulah. He requested that his name be removed from the roll in Apr1851 - it was approved per the minutes. However, Thomas contributed cash to building a new church building in 1860. The minutes seem to have him listed on a committee at some later date. Unclear what happened.
- 7) **David Drummond** (Thomas' father and another ancestor of Ann) was also listed as a member of Beulah when he contributed cash to building a new building in 1860. There was a misunderstanding about "stolen cotton" (which was returned) in Nov1865 with David asking that his name be removed from the roll. However, David rejoined the congregation in Oct 1870.
- 8) **Joseph Cartee** (one of Ann's ancestors) joined Beulah in Feb1847 by letter. There was no mention of a wife.
- 9) Initially, Beulah Church did not have a budget. However, in Nov 1857 the congregation decided to pay the preacher \$150/yr. They set up a "subscription system" (based on percentage of property tax) by which each member was coerced into paying his fair share.
- 10) Feb 1862 - The Church agreed to pay a black janitor \$1.75 for sweeping the church for the previous year.
- 11) Even as late as 1860, the Church was still contributing less than \$5/year to the Association.
- 12) Apparently, the Beulah Church Building burned in Aug1871. However, the minutes are not helpful in determining how it was rebuilt. Instead, minutes talk about members refusing a request from Buck Creek that meeting be moved from Beulah to Buck Creek because of this fire.
- 13) There is a note in the minutes of Aug1869 that **Edmund Waller Henderson** was a delegate from Bethel Church.
- 14) Minutes of Nov1862 talk about a 9-day revival meeting (including an outside preacher) - minutes have similar meetings in later years. Description of the revival meeting sounds like some of those 'revival meetings' George enjoyed (or rather endured) as a child.
- 15) Nov1877 - **Edmund Waller & Elizabeth Henderson** joined Beulah Church by letter from Bethel Church.
- 16) Jun1877 - Edmund Waller Henderson assigned job of defining needed repairs for the church's baptistry or 'pool'. Photo of Beulah Church Baptistry below was taken in August 1943. The pool was filled with cool (or even cold) spring water. Persons in photo include Rev J L Watson plus:
  - back row: James Storey, Melvin Lamb, Jimmy Hollingsworth, Guy Pearce, Artice Hamilton, Paul Drummond
  - front row: Elizabeth Burroughs, Jeanne Atkins, Janet Taylor, Lois Storey, and Jewel Pearce.





*Baptizing at Beulah Church*

- 17) Dec1887 - Church agreed to pay pastor \$200/year. Each member was assigned a pro rata share of this cost. Note: Within a few years there were complaints that some were not paying their share of the budget.
- 18) Sep1892 - Edmund Waller Henderson was elected clerk of Beulah Church. Edmund remained clerk until May1899 when he resigned because of health problems.
- 19) Dec1892 - David Drummond named as Church Sexton - George suspects this means Church Treasurer.
- 20) Dec1892 - Congregation agreed to wipe out all disciplinary actions and treat future cases more kindly. However, this vote was overturned in Jul1893 and there were numerous disciplinary cases afterwards.
- 21) Jul1894 - Edmund Waller Henderson was added to Committee Report. One practical impact of this was that Edmund was designated to attend a lot of meetings.
- 22) May1895 - J. M. Chambers killed Harvey Mize - church 'excluded' Chambers for killing another church member. For some reason, Chambers asked church to defer his 'exclusion vote' until after he went to trial. The church did not wait to vote on his exclusion.
- 23) Aug1896 - Robert Lamb asked that his name be taken off the roll as it had been a mistake for him to join the church because he was not religious.



24) Aug1896 - Membership was 69 male and 90 female members.

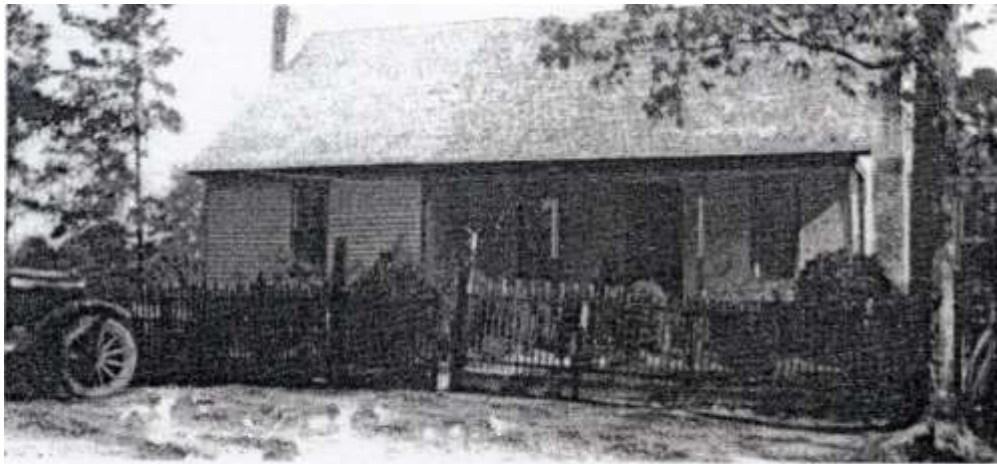
25) Jul1897 - Church voted to forbid "lemonade or other beverage drinks" within one mile of the church. They later voted to keep lemonade away from some association meeting to extent of asking nearby landowners to not allow lemonade. No indication of why such beverages were of concern to the church members. Note: Further research suggests that 'lemonade' was a code word for moonshine similarly to how 'buttermilk' was a code word for moonshine in middle Tennessee.



6496 County Road 213  
Greene County, Alabama USA  
(circa 1991)



Beulah Baptist Church Cemetery, c1991



*Beulah Parsonage, Smith, Bonds, Atkins home,  
ca.1920. Haunted House at Beulah.*

# **Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church**

**Pleasant Ridge, Greene County, AL**

## **Early History of the Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church** **Pleasant Ridge, Greene County, Alabama** by Scott W. Owens

In accordance with an appointment of the Tuscaloosa Presbytery, Rev. J. L. Kirkpatrick and Rev. C. A. Stillman met on November 18, 1848, and organized a Presbyterian church at Pleasant Ridge. The church was formed with the following charter members: James H. Archibald, Mary A. Archibald, Elizabeth Archibald, Samuel S. Archibald, Andrew B. Archibald, William Steele, Eleanore Steele, Elizabeth W. Steele, William P. Kennedy, Elizabeth A. Kennedy, James M. Kennedy, William Leroy Kennedy, and Elizabeth A. Hutchins. The Steeles and Archibalds had been members at Mesopotamia Presbyterian Church in Eutaw, the Kennedys and Miss Hutchins from the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Clinton. Rev. Stillman preached from I Timothy 5:17 at the organizational service, with Rev. Kirkpatrick presiding, this service being held at a home near the present site of the church. On motion it was resolved that the church elect three ruling elders. Elected as the first Session of the Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church were: James H. Archibald, William Steele, and Dr. William P. Kennedy. All these men had previously been ordained as ruling elders; they were installed at the organization as elders of this church. Dr. Kennedy was elected Clerk of the Session. Rev. J. L. Kirkpatrick then gave a charge to the elders and also to the people. It was then determined by a vote of the congregation that this church be called Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church.

The Session met after the services of organization, Rev. Kirkpatrick presiding and opening with prayer. The following persons presented themselves to the Session for admission into the communion of the church, and upon examination as to their religious experience were received: J. A. Williams, R. T. Kennedy, Joseph Benton, Mary Benton, Mary Bostick, and Ann J. Bostick.

The church continued to meet in the home for services. The pulpit was filled by stated supplies A.P. Silliman in 1849 and Fields Bradshaw in 1851, as well as Rev. C. A. Stillman, R. W. B. Kennedy, and M. Calvin from 1848-1855. The first infant baptized in the church was Samuel Miller Archibald, son of Edwin Addison and Ellen Jane Archibald, on March 14, 1851 by Rev. N. R. Morgan. By this time there were twenty-three communicant members of the congregation. On February 18, 1854, the church elected, ordained, and installed its first deacons, Samuel S. Archibald and Richard M. Kennedy. This same day, Edwin Addison Archibald was elected ruling elder of the church.

On September 8, 1855, the 41 communicant members convened in a Congregational Meeting, Rev. R. W. B. Kennedy presiding. After a reading a portion of Scripture, singing, and prayer, the moderator proceeded to take the votes of the congregation for Pastor of the same. Whereupon Rev. J. P. McMullen was unanimously elected. A call was then drawn in due form, and subscribed to by the Electors. Thus the Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church called its first pastor.

James Porter McMullen was born July 21, 1811 in Abbeville District, South Carolina, the youngest son of Archibald and Mary (Dunlap) McMullen, members of the Associate Reformed Church. He did not profess Christ until the twenty-third year of his life. When he reached manhood, he moved to Alabama where his brother Robert B. McMullen, D.D., then resided. At a Tuscaloosa Presbytery meeting at Eutaw, at the Mesopotamia Presbyterian Church, in 1833 that he joined himself to the church, and shortly thereafter he gave himself to the sacred ministry. He

attended the AManuel Labor School at Marion, Alabama during the years 1834 and 1835 to begin his literary education. Thereafter he entered Franklin College in Athens, Georgia in 1836, graduating with honors in 1838. On November 4, 1838, James married Miss Martha S. Fulton at the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Clinton. James was a member of this church until at least 1840. He studied theology privately under the direction of his brother the Rev. Dr. McMullen until 1841. In April of 1841 he was licensed by the Tuscaloosa Presbytery and in December he was ordained and installed as pastor of the churches of Mt. Zion, Concord, and Carthage Presbyterian churches in eastern Greene County, now Hale County. Here he labored thirteen years, and was much blessed in the successful result of his ministry.

Upon his acceptance of the call to pastorship by the Pleasant Ridge church, James P. McMullen was also pastor of the Bethesda Presbyterian Church in Pickens County. *Snedecor's Greene County Directory, 1856* indicates that Mr. McMullen was also pastor of the New Hope Church in Knoxville, some distance to the northeast.

The effects of his ministry at Pleasant Ridge were even more fruitful than his previous ministry in eastern Greene County. From 1855 to 1860 eighty-three members were added to the rolls of the church, including twenty African-American members. The first of these was Jacob, servant of William Porter, who was received into full communion of the church on letter of the Hebron Presbyterian Church in Union. Although all the African-American members were servants in the community, half of those who joined the church during this antebellum period were servants whose masters were not members themselves or most certainly did not attend the church, or were members at churches of other denominations in the community. Clearly the African-American members attended the services of this church by their own choice. Session records reveal that examination of religious experience, admission to membership, and matters of church discipline were administered equally regardless of race or social status. On March 14, 1856, the church elected James M. McGowan ruling elder.

With the growth of the congregation a permanent and appropriate house of worship was needed. In 1859 a Greek Revival church building (similar to structure of the First Presbyterian Church in Eutaw) was constructed on land which had been purchased on the Mouth of Sipsey road, near the Baptist church. The central double entrance doors led to a shallow vestibule, with stairs in the right corner leading to the upper gallery entirely above the vestibule. The double isle sanctuary was heated by pot belly stoves at the four corners. The rostrum at the front was surmounted by a railing, with a box pulpit. Walls and ceilings were plastered; woodwork was stained oak. Three brass whale oil chandeliers were over each isle, with one larger chandelier over the pulpit. The tower over the west facade was fitted with louvers in the belfry. A hipped copper roof topped the bell tower.



During this time the church mourned the death of one of the founding elders. On February 17, 1859, Mr. William Steele died at his home in Pleasant Ridge. A lengthy tribute to Mr. Steele was prepared by the Session and published in the *Tuscaloosa Presbyterian*. George Washington Knox and Abner Alexander Archibald were elected ruling elders January 28, 1860.

With the coming national crisis in 1861, the growth of the church continued under Mr. McMullen's ministry. While no new members were received in 1861, a couple and their servant were received on letter, as a family, in 1862; one communicant joined in 1863 and seventeen in 1864, the latter number including three African-Americans. During 1861 and 1862 many of the men of the church answered the call of the colors. No less than twenty-five members of the Pleasant Ridge church are documented in Confederate service. This little church furnished two chaplains, one each for the two major field armies. William P. Kennedy, a founding elder, was chaplain of the 11th Alabama Infantry in the Army of Northern Virginia; the pastor himself answered the call of the chaplaincy in 1864, ministering to the 42nd Alabama Infantry of the Army of Tennessee. Of those who served in their country's armies, eleven did not return.

The Church reached its peak membership of 177 members on the active roll in 1873. However, by 1875, the membership was less than 100 members. Apparently, they were having services only once per month. The Church was integrated until 1885 when the Presbytery decided that a separate church should be provided for the black members.

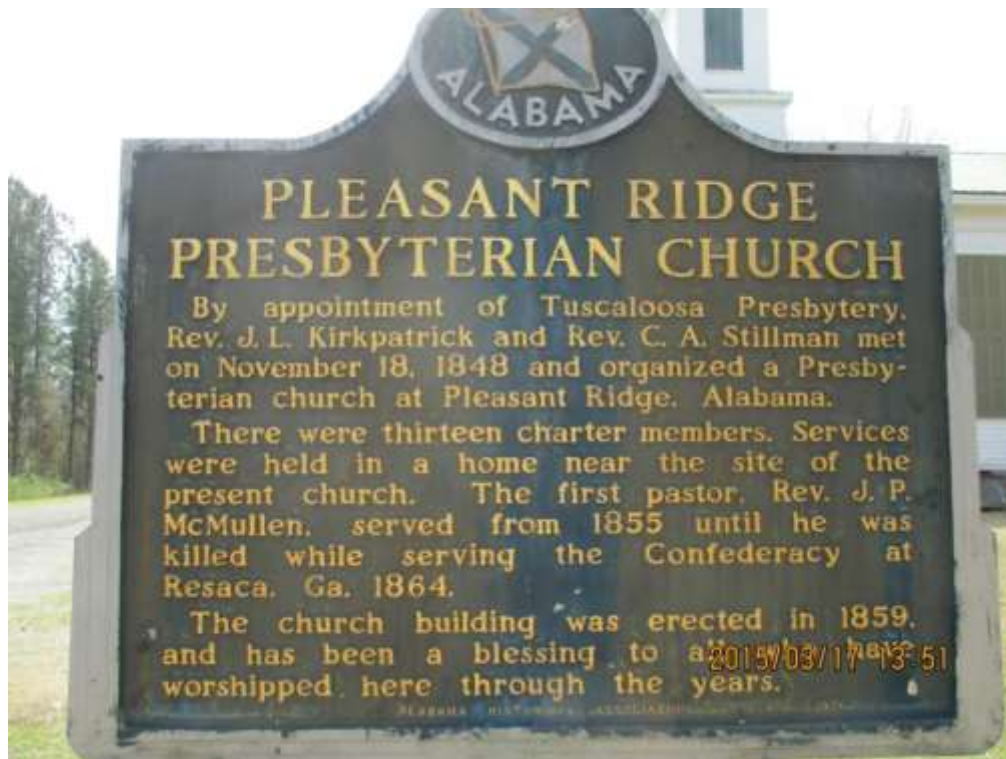
**William & Sarah (nee Nason) Montgomery** who would become Ann's grandparents first migrated from South Carolina to Mississippi in the early 1800s and settled near present-day Starkville. After her husband's death in Mississippi, **Sarah Nason** remarried and her new family moved from Mississippi to Pleasant Ridge, Alabama which is located about 20 miles south of Tuscaloosa and 14 miles west of I-20/US59 on Highway 14. The Montgomery family members were Presbyterian. Three (3) of Ann's grandparents are buried at Pleasant Ridge Cemetery to include:



- \* Sarah Isabella Nason Montgomery Archibald (6.5)  
- Sarah married Thomas Archibald after 1st husband died
- \* David Milton Montgomery and Virginia L. Bardwell (see 5.3)

Other Montgomery family members buried at Pleasant Ridge include:

- a) Thomas P Archibald (1818-1877) - 2nd husband of Sarah Isabella Nason
- b) Laura Glenn Montgomery (1843-1876) - Daughter of Sarah Isabella Nason
- c) Infant son (1861) of Thomas P and Sarah Archibald
- d) Infant son (1870) of David Montgomery and 1st wife Martha Sanders
- e) Martha C Sanders (1844-1871) - 1st wife of David Montgomery
- f) William Hunter Montgomery (1879) - infant son of David Montgomery and Virginia Bardwell





Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church (circa 2015)  
(Notice shuttered windows)



Pleasant Ridge Cemetery - Notice woods at back of cemetery. There is a downward slope into the woods which includes a few old markers but most of that area is barren - which indicates that some of these oldest graves have been lost.

# **Hebron Presbyterian Church**

Mantua, Greene County, Alabama

The Reverend Andrew Brown preached the first sermon at Hebron Presbyterian Church in March 1822. The church was organized in 1824, when the Reverend Thomas Archibald came from South Carolina and settled in the area between the Hebron and the New Hope Church in Knoxville in order that he might serve both churches. The deed is on record at the Presbyterian Historical Foundation at Montreat, North Carolina showing the church received 80 acres in grant dated October 1, 1835. The second meeting of the Tuscaloosa Presbytery was held at Hebron on October 1, 1835.

The church building was on the order of the Presbyterian Church at Clinton and is believed to have been built at about the same time. The Snedecor Directory of 1856 lists Hebron Church with 244 members. This was the largest Presbyterian Church in Greene County at that time. Most of its membership must have been lost before 1900 as the building became neglected and collapsed in 1918. In 1920 a congregational meeting was held to decide if the church should be rebuilt. It was not, and it is believed that the last active member of the church, Miss Lucy Brown, was buried there in 1923. Dr R E Fulton was moderator of the 1920 meeting and it was he who documented much of the history of the church which was dissolved by the Tuscaloosa Presbytery in 1931.

The cemetery has been used by both black and white members and it is still cleaned off each year. There is a fund for future care of the cemetery. One shortcoming here is that many older tombstones have fallen over and are being slowly buried by mowed vegetation.

George visited the Hebron Cemetery in October 2016 and photographed about 300 of its older tombstones. As indicated above, the last 'oldtimer' to be interned at Hebron was in 1923. The original church and cemetery property consisted of 80 acres - the current cemetery is about ten acres configured in a triangular shape. The original Hebron Presbyterian Church and 'oldtimers' cemetery was located in the middle of the triangle. This central area is kept mowed but many of its tombstones have fallen over and are becoming either shattered or buried in the debris. According to George's analysis, there are at least 400 'oldtimer' burials (i.e., prior to 1923) in the Hebron Cemetery. As you can see, a lot of these tombstones have been destroyed and a large number of pieces are stacked in a central location as shown in the following photos.

Note: Church records of the 1920 meeting indicate members voted to sell the property except for five acres and use the proceeds to fund future upkeep. However, George's estimate (as of October 2016) is that cemetery covers at least ten acres of land - arranged in a triangular shape.

One unusual aspect of Hebron Cemetery is the site could be considered as two separate cemeteries. As indicated above, there are at least 400 'oldtimer' burials located in the central area of the triangular plot. However, the cemetery was 'reopened' in more recent decades and there are at least 150-200 burials which are clustered in each of the three 'corners' of the cemetery property. Burials continue to this day - these tombstones present a stark contrast to the

'oldtimers' tombstones. Hint: Notice difference in color between tombstones located near center of the cemetery versus the newer tombstones located in the right rear portion of the photo.



Hebron Cemetery at Mantua, Greene County, AL (c2016)



Stacked pieces of Tombstones at Hebron Presbyterian Church (c2016)



The Mayes family were active members of the Hebron Presbyterian Church in the 1830s and 1840s. Per family records three (3) of Ann Ella's grandparents (i.e., members of the Mayes family) are buried in the Hebron Cemetery. Ann Ella's grandparents who are buried at Hebron include:

- \* Samuel James Mayes (1823-1842)
- \* Edward Mayes (1772-1848)
- \* Nancy A Archibald Mayes (1786-1845)

**Per Jim Taylor; Houston, Texas; ladasca@aol.com; November, 2002**

*In its lifetime, estimated from about 1828 to 1905, Hebron Presbyterian Church was a busy worship and community center for Mantua. Greene County, AL, but both the Church and the adjoining cemetery have met a sad and unfortunate fate. The Church dissolved and the building has disappeared. The road to its old location is now an eroded red clay path. The cemetery has suffered from neglect, but much more from deliberate destruction. Today, only a fraction of the graves remain marked; what pieces remain of the other markers is hidden in long grass. My father, Cecil Adrian Taylor [b 17 Jan 1916/d 15 Sep 1989 and the son of Walter Eugene Taylor, Sr. and Vicie Elizabeth Wilson] grew up in the Mantua area. Before he died, we visited the site where the church used to be. I already knew that some of my ancestors were members of Hebron and are buried in the cemetery; I am now sure that many more are buried there.*