

**INDEX FOR DAVID BENEDICT'S  
VIRGINIA BAPTIST HISTORY  
1848**

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## History of Virginia Baptists

Section I

By David Benedict, 1848

**General View of the Rise of the Baptists in the State -- First Company, in 1714 -- Second do., in 1743 -- Third do., in 1754 -- The early Churches planted by these Companies -- David Thomas -- S. Stearns -- D. Marshall -- Col. Harris and others -- Division of the great Separate Association -- General Association divided into Four -- Baptist Apostles in Va.**  
[Editor's note: The word do means ditto, (the same). jrd]

ALTHOUGH so early was the planting of the Virginia colony as to entitle the State to the appellation of the Old Dominion, yet, compared with some of the older colonies, it was at a late period that our society gained much of a foothold within its bounds. A few small churches, as we shall soon see, were planted in this government soon after the commencement of the 18th century; but it was something past the middle of it before the proselytes to our peculiar opinions had become so considerable as to excite much attention among either friends or opponents.

According to Morgan Edwards' list for 1768, there were then but about ten baptist churches in all parts of Virginia. These were generally in the upper part of it, between the Blue Ridge and the waters of the Potomac. But after they began their operations in good earnest, so rapid was their increase, that by 1790, according to Asplund's Register, their churches had increased to 210, their ministers, ordained and licensed, to about 250, and their communicants to upwards of 20,000.

In 22 years more, according to my tables for 1812, their numerical strength amounted to upwards of 35,000.

During the next succeeding 21 years, such was the augmentation of numbers, as by Allen's Register for 1836, that the whole baptist population in this State, so far as church members were concerned, was 59,000. For the last ten years, about 24,000 have been added to their number. The sum total in no State shall I attempt to give, until my tables are made up at the close of the volume.

The Associations now existing in this State, great and small, are 37. These, after giving the general history of our affairs here, I shall describe under three divisions, Eastern, Middle, and Western.

The baptists of Virginia originated from three principal sources:

1. The first were emigrants from England, who, about the year 1714, settled in the south-east part of the State.
2. The second company came from Maryland, and formed a settlement near the north-west part, as the population then stood, about 1743.
3. The third party came from New England in 1754, and by them was laid the foundation for the most successful and extensive enterprises of our denomination in their early movements in this State. This last company was of what was then called the Separate Order.

A brief account of these different companies will now be given, and then we shall be prepared to show their ultimate union, and their grand and successful efforts to throw off the grievous and oppressive; yoke which the old ecclesiastical establishment had imposed on all dissenters, and that they had operated in the most trying and vexatious manner on the zealous founders of the baptist cause in this then rude and uncultivated Province.

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## FIRST COMPANY, FROM ENGLAND.

We cannot learn that any of the original settlers of Virginia were baptists, nor do we find any of this denomination in this country until more than a century after its settlement. The accounts of their origin in the State vary in dates and some other little matters; but the following statement, I believe, is the most correct; and circumstantial which can be obtained at this late period.

In consequence of letters from Virginia, Robert Nordin and Thomas White were ordained in London, in May, 1714, and soon sailed for Virginia; but White died on the way, and Nordin arrived in Virginia, and gathered a church at a place called Burley, in the county of the Isle of Wight. There were probably a number of baptists settled in this place before the arrival of Nordin, by whose request, and for the service of whom, he and White were ordained and undertook the distant voyage; but who, or how many these were, or how long they had been there, are inquiries which we cannot answer.

Mr. Nordin continued preaching at Burley and other places until he died in a good old age, in 1725. Two years after his death, viz., in 1727, Casper Mintz and Richard Jones, both preachers, arrived from England, and settled with the church at Burley, and Jones became their pastor. Both of these ministers were living in 1756, as appears by a letter which this church sent at that time to the Philadelphia Association. by the year 1729, as appears by a letter sent by Rev. Paul Palmer, from North Carolina, to Rev. John Comer, of Newport, Rhode Island, there was, besides the church at Burley, another in the county of Surrey. Respecting these churches, Mr. Palmer wrote as follows:

"There is a comely little church in the Isle of Wight county, of about thirty or forty members, the elder of which is one Richard Jones, a very sensible old gentleman, whom I have great love for. We see each other at every yearly meeting and sometimes more often. There is another church in Surry county, where my brother Jones lives, I suppose about thirty more."

How long these churches continued in existence I cannot exactly learn. Respecting the one in the county of Surry, no information can be obtained except what is found in Mr. Palmer's letter. The one in the Isle of Wight, we have good reason to believe, continued on the ground where it was first established between forty and fifty years, when, according to Morgan Edwards' account, it was broken up, partly by sickness, and partly by the removal of families from hence to North Carolina, where they gained many proselytes. and in ten years became sixteen churches.

They were all General Baptists; but in a few years after their settlement in North Carolina, they began to embrace the Calvinistic sentiments, as will be seen in the history of the baptists in that State. In 1756, the church at Burley sent the following letter to the Philadelphia Association:

"The church of Jesus Christ, in Isle of Wight county, holding adult baptism, c., to the Reverend and General Assembly or Association at Philadelphia, send greeting: We, the above mentioned church, confess ourselves to be under clouds of darkness concerning the faith of Jesus Christ, not knowing whether we are on the right foundation, and the church much unsettled: wherefore we desire alliance with you, and that you will be pleased to send as helps to settle the church, and rectify what may be wrong, and subscribe ourselves, your loving brethren in Christ, Casper Mintz, Richard Jones, Randall Allen, Joseph Mattgum, Christopher Atkinson, Benjamin Atkinson, David Atkinson, Thomas Cafer, Samuel Jones, William Jordan, John Allen, John Powell, Joseph Atkinson. Dec. 27, 1756."

This is the last account I can find of this church; what was done by the Association in their case I do not find. Messrs. Miller, Vanhorn, and Gano traveled frequently into Virginia and North Carolina about this time, for the purpose of regulating the disordered churches, and it is probable that in some of their journeys they visited this one, which made such an honest confession of their deplorable state.

It does not appear that this company of baptists suffered any persecution or civil embarrassments, from the time of their settlement in Virginia to that of their dispersion. They probably obtained legal licences [sic] for their assemblies, in conformity to the act of toleration.

As this community appears to have soon transferred from Virginia to North Carolina, the reader is

referred to the history of the Baptists in that State, where a more particular account of them will be given.

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#### THE SECOND COMPANY, FROM MARYLAND.

The next appearance of the Baptists in this State was in the north part of it, in the counties of Berkley, Loudon, and their vicinities, on the ground which was afterwards occupied by the Regular Baptists. Between the years 1743; and 1756, three churches were gathered in these counties, by the names of Opeckon, which was afterwards called Millcreek, Smith's and Lynville's creek, and Ketockton. A brief account of the origin of these churches will now be given.

The church on Opeckon creek appears to have been the oldest, of the three, and was gathered and renovated in the following manner. In the year 1743, a number of the members of the General Baptist church, at Chestnut Ridge, in Maryland, removed to Virginia, and settled in this place, the most noted of whom were Edward Hays and Thomas Yates. Soon after their removal, their minister, Henry Loveall, followed them, and baptized about fifteen persons, whom he formed into a church on the Arminian plan. Mr. Loveall becoming licentious in his life, was turned out of the church, and returned to Maryland, and the church was broken up, or rather transformed into a church of Particular Baptists, in 1751, by the advice and assistance of Messrs. James Miller, David Thomas, and John Gano, who was at that time very young. Mr. Miller had visited this church in some of his former journeys, and had been instrumental of much good among them; and when they, in their troubles, occasioned by Loveall's misconduct, petitioned the Philadelphia Association for some assistance, he and Mr. Thomas were appointed by the Association for the purpose. Mr. Gano, though not appointed, chose to accompany them. The account of this transaction is thus given by Mr. Gano:

"We examined them, and found they were not a regular church. We then examined those who offered themselves for the purpose, and those who gave us satisfaction we received, and constituted a new church. Out of the whole who offered themselves, there were only three received. Some openly declared they knew they could not give an account of experiencing a work of grace; and therefore need not offer themselves. Others stood ready to offer if the church was formed. The three before mentioned were constituted, and six more were baptized and joined with them. After the meeting ended, a number of old members went aside and sent for me. They expressed their deplorable state, and asked me if I would meet with them that evening, and try to instruct them. They were afraid the ministers blamed them. They had been misled, but it was not their fault, and they hoped I would pity them. I told them I would with all my heart, and endeavored to remove their suspicion of the ministers. They met, and I spoke to them front these words: 'They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' I hope I was assisted to speak to them in an impressive manner, and they to hear, at least some of them, so as to live. They afterwards professed and became zealous members, and remained so, I believe, until their death."

It was in the bounds of this church that Stearns and Marshall met, on their way to North Carolina. At this time, Samuel Heaton was their pastor, and acted in that capacity until 1754, when he removed to Konoloway, Pennsylvania, and was succeeded by Mr. John Garrard, who is supposed to have been a native of Pennsylvania, and who became the most distinguished pastor the church had hitherto enjoyed. The Opeckon church united with the Philadelphia Association soon after its renovation, in 1757. They became very warm and animated in their religious exercises, and more particularly so, after Mr. Marshall and the zealous Separates came amongst them; and they soon went to such lengths in their New Light career, that some of the less engaged members lodged a complaint against them in the Association to which they belonged. Mr. Miller was again sent for the purpose of adjusting their difficulties. When he came, he was highly delighted with the exercises, joined them cordially, and said, if he had such warm-hearted christians in his church, he would not take gold for them. He charged those who had complained, rather to nourish than complain of such gifts. The work of God revived among them, and considerable additions were made to the church. The country in which they had settled was but

thinly inhabited, and was subject to the inroads of the Indians. Some of these savage irruptions [sic] took place not long after Mr. Garrard had settled among them; in consequence of which, he and many of the church removed below the Blue Ridge, and resided for some time in Loudon county, on Ketockton Creek. This evil was overruled for good; for, by the labors of Mr. Garrard in his new residence, to which, by the barbarous intruders, he was obliged to repair, many were brought to a knowledge of salvation, and a church was formed, which was called Ketockton, in 1756, and Mr. Garrard became their pastor.

The Smith's and Lynville's Creek Church, afterwards called Smith's Creek, is said to have been constituted also in 1756. There were some baptist families in this place as early as 1745, eleven years before the church was organized; but from what place they emigrated, we are not informed; only it is stated that one John Harrison, wishing to be baptized, went as far as Oyster Bay, on Long Island, in the State of New York, to obtain an administrator. As there were baptist churches and ministers much nearer, the presumption is, that he, if no others, had removed from that place.

David Thomas. As this eminent and very successful minister was closely connected with this company of baptists, who soon assumed the name of Regulars, in all their movements, until they united with the Separates, and probably did more than any other man to extend and regulate their affairs, it may be proper here to give a brief sketch of his character and operations.

Mr. Thomas was born August 16, 1732, at London Tract, Pa., and had his education at Hopewell, N. J., under the famous Isaac Eaton, and, in early life, received the honorary degree of M. A., from the College of Rhode Island.

He had previously made a number of missionary excursions into this State, under the patronage of the Philadelphia Association, but, in 1760, he removed here, and became a permanent resident. His first stand was in Berkley county, with, or near to the Opeckon, or Mill Creek Church; but, two years after, he removed to the county of Fauquier, and became the pastor of the Broad Run Church, which was gathered soon after he removed to the place. In this place, and in a wide circuit around, he acted a most distinguished part for about thirty years, when he removed to Kentucky, where he lived to an advanced age, and became nearly blind some time before his death.(1)

"Mr. Thomas is said to have been a minister of great distinction in the prime of his days. Besides the natural endowment of a vigorous mind, and the advantages of a classical and refined education, he had a melodious a piercing voice and pathetic address, expressive action, and, above all, a heart filled with love to God and his fellow-men. But, for a few of the first years of his ministry in Virginia, he met with much persecution. He was frequently assaulted both by individuals and mobs. Once he was pulled down while he was preaching, and dragged out of the House in a barbarous manner. At another time, a malevolent fellow attempted to shoot him, but a by-stander wrenched the gun from him, and thereby prevented the execration of his wicked purpose. The slanders and revilings he met with, says Mr. Edwards, were innumerable, and it we may judge of a man's prevalency against the devil, by the rage of the devil's children, Thomas prevailed like a prince. But the gospel had free course; and Broad Run church, of which he was pastor within six or eight years from its establishment, branched out and became the mother of five or six others. The Chapawamsick church was constituted from Broad Run, in 1766."(2)

Elder Thomas traveled much, and the fame of his preaching drew the attention of the people throughout an extensive circle, so that in many instance, they came fifty and sixty miles to hear him. It is remarkable that, about this time, there were multiplied instances, in different parts of Virginia, of persons who had never heard any evangelical preaching, but who were brought, through divine grace, to see and feel their wants of vital godliness. Many of these persons, when they heard of Mr. Thomas and other baptist preachers, would travel great distances to hear them, and to procure their services, as ministers of the gospel. By these means the gospel was first carried into the county of Culpepper, as will be related in the history of the Separates.

**BROAD RUN CHURCH.** As this is one of the oldest, and for a long time was among the most distinguished churches of this State, it may be proper in this place to give a short account of its

origin and early operations.

"The manner in which Mr. Thomas was introduced among them, is thus related. A short time previous to his removing to Virginia, two men in this region, without any public preaching, became much concerned about their souls and eternal things; were convinced of the reality of vital religion, and that they were destitute of it. While laboring under these convictions, they heard of the baptists (new-lights, as some called them), in Berkley county, and set out in search of them: -- after traveling about sixty miles over a mountainous way, they arrived among them. By their preaching and conversation, they were much enlightened and comforted, and were so happy as to find what had hitherto been to them mysterious, how a weary and heavy-laden sinner might have rest. The name of one of them was Peter Cornwell, who afterwards lived to a good old age, and was so eminent for his piety, as to receive from his neighbors and acquaintances the title of 'St. Peter.' It is relate by Mr. Edwards, that this Peter Cornwell induced Edmund Hays (the same man that removed from Maryland to Virginia, in 1743), to remove and settle near him, and that the interviews between the families of these two men were frequent, and their conversation religious and devout; insomuch, that it soon began to be talked of abroad as a strange thing. Many came to see them, to whom the related what God had done for their souls. They exhorted, prayed, read the Bible and other good books, to the spreading of seriousness through the whole neighborhood; Cornwell and his companion (whose name is not, mentioned) in a short lime made another visit to Berkley, and were baptized; and Divine Providence had so ordered matters, that in this visit they met Mr. Thomas whom they invited to go down; and preach among them. He accepted the invitation, and settled with them as above related, and soon became the instrument of diffusing gospel light in Fauquier and the adjoining counties, where ignorance and superstition had long prevailed."**(3)**

Messrs. Thomas and Garrard, sometimes together and at other tithes apart, traveled and propagated the pure principles of Christianity, in all the upper counties of the Northern Neck; but Mr. Thomas was the most active.

"The established clergy, and the friends of the establishment generally, viewed with a jealous eye the successful efforts of the baptists, and adopted various methods to embarrass and defeat them."

The clergy often attacked the preachers from the pulpit; called them false prophets; wolves in sheeps' clothing; and really other hard names equally unappropriate and slanderous. But unfortunately for them, the baptists retorted these charges, by professing to believe their own articles; at least, the leading ones, and charged them with denying them; a charge which they could easily substantiate; for the doctrines most complained of; as advanced by the Baptists, were obviously laid down in the common prayer-book.

When they could not succeed by argument, they would adopt more violent measures. Sometimes the preachers, anti solve who only read sermons and prayed publicly, were carried before the magistrates, anti though loot committed to prison, were sharply reprimanded and cautioned not to be righteous over-much.

The reasons why the Regular Baptists were not so much persecuted as the Separates was, that they had at an early date, applied to the General Court, and obtained licenses for particular places of preaching, under the toleration law of England; but few of their enemies knew the extent of the licenses; most supposing, that they were by there authorized to preach any where in the county.

"The Regulars also were considered less enthusiastic then [than] the Separates. They were often visited by men of note from the Phil. Asso. and having Thomas at their head, whose eloquence was commanding and whose learning was respectable for the times, all those things united, operated in their favor. But in the midst of the greatest oppression and persecution, the Baptist cause still flourished and went forward; new churches were constituted, and young preachers were raised up. Of these, none were more distinguished than Richard Major; although he was past the meridian of life, before he embarked in the ministry.

"He seems to have made such good use of his time, that he did more in the vineyard than many

who had toiled all the day. Daniel and William Fristoe, Jeremiah Moore, and others were early fruits of Elder Thomas' ministry. These young heralds uniting their endeavors with those of the more experienced, became zealous laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.(4)

Before the year 1770, the Regular baptists were spread over the whole country, in the Northern Neck above Fredericksburg. Between 1770 and 1780, their cords still continued to be lengthened. Mr. Lunsford, a young but extraordinary preacher, carried the tidings of peace downwards, and planted the Redeemer's standard in those counties of the Northern Neck, which are below Fredericksburg. Messrs. Corbley, Sutton and Barnet, had moved over the Alleghany, and had raised up several churches in the north-west counties as early as 1775. Mr. John Alderson had gone, in 1777, to Greenbrier, and in a few years raised up a people for God in that region. Besides these, there were some others who moved more southward, and raised up a few churches.

"During the time of the greatest declension of religion among the Virginia Baptists, which prevailed soon after the close of the war, the Regulars were under a cloud as well as their brethren the Separates; and they also participated to the great revival in 1785, and some years following."

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### **Third company from New England, at that time denominated New Lights,**

or Separates.

This company was led hither by Shubeal Stearns, Daniel Marshall, and their associates. The original company, with the adherents which continually gathered around their standard, continued their progress southward, halting at different places on the way, planting churches, leaving portions of their preachers and exhorters to carry forward their evangelizing plans, until the final settlement of Marshall in Georgia.

Their doings at Sandy Creek and vicinity, in N. C., and also at Congeree, in S. C., will be related under the heads of those States.

This company of New England New Lights, was the most important one of the baptist order in this State; and from it originated the great mass of the churches which, with such overwhelming rapidity, spread over most of eastern Virginia, in the course of about a quarter of a century. This State, which was their first stopping place, after leaving the land of their nativity, became the principal scene of their action, suffering, and success. "Here they pushed forward their operations with an ardor approaching to primitive times, amidst all that kind of vexations, ill-bred, ill-natured, and tantalizing hostility, which the minions of a declining hierarchy, with but the shadow of power, were able to maintain."(5)

Samuel Harris. As this distinguished man was for many years at the heed of the Separate Baptists in this State, before, we proceed in the history of this community, we shall give some brief sketches of his origin, the manner of his introduction into the baptist ministry, and the commencement of his evangelical and successful career. Col. Harris, as he was usually called, was born in Hanover county, January 12, 1724.

Few men could boast of a more respectable parentage. His education, though not the most liberal, was very considerable for the customs of the day. When young, he moved to the county of Pittsylvania; and as he advanced in age, became a favorite with the people as well as with the rulers. He was appointed Church Warden, Sheriff, a Justice of the Peace, Burgess for the county, Colonel of the Militia, Captain of Mayo Fort, and Commissary for the fort and army.

All these offices and honors, with their accompaniments, were disposed of in a very summary manner under the influence of his new impressions. And as he was a man of considerable wealth, he at once went out in his new and ardent vocation at his own cost; and for about thirty years, he was a self-supported missionary in nearly all the then settled parts of this extensive State.

His conversion was effected under the ministry of two young and illiterate preachers, by the name

of Joseph and William Murphy, at that time commonly called Murphy's boys. This happened in one of his official tours to visit the forts under his care, soon after he was baptized by Daniel Marshall, in one of his missionary journeys into that region. This event probably took place some time in the year 1758. The year after he was ordained a ruling elder, an office which these descendants of the N. E. Puritans brought with them from their own country.

The baptist historians of Virginia, Leland, Semple, and Taylor, all speak of Mr. Harris in strains of the highest commendation; indeed, some of their eulogies seem to border on the marvelous and superlative.

It was a rare thing, in those times, for men of his worldly distinction to unite with the people who were, in the fullest sense of the passage, every where spoken against. His expansive benevolence in the use of his abundant means for doing good; the child-like simplicity which he always displayed after his conversion; his freedom of intercourse with people of all conditions among his new, and for the most part poor and despised associates; his, blameless life; and finally his pious and irrepressible ardor in the ministerial service; all had a tendency to bind him to the denomination, by strong and lasting ties.

And for a man of his military character and habits, his muscular bowers, and fearless intrepidity, with Christian meekness and submission, with no show of resentment or resistance, in nearly all his first ministerial journeys, to suffer the violent assaults of his rude and persecuting countrymen, must have produced most favorable impressions, on the minds of all candid observers, in favor of his own religious character, and of the cause in which he was engaged.

We have seen that Mr. Harris was ordained ruling elder in 1759.

As a minister, he was not ordained until ten years after.

Eccentricity and new experiments were then the order of the day, and among them came up, in a few years after, the ordination of this venerable man, then fifty years of age, to the office of a Baptist Apostle.

This singular transaction will be described in the close of the history of the Separate Baptists. We are now prepared to continue the history of the new and zealous operations which come trader this head, and shall make our selections almost verbatim. from Semple's history of the Virginia Baptists.

"Harris seemed destined of God to labor more extensively in Virginia than in any other State. And having done touch good in his own neighborhood. is the year 1765, the time arrived for him to extend his labors. In January of this year, Allen Wyley, an inhabitant of Culpepper, and who had been baptized by David Thomas, hearing of the Separate Baptist preachers, traveled as far as Pittsylvania, in order to get one or more of them to come and preach in his own county. He traveled on, scarcely knowing whither he went, but an unseen hand directed his course. He providentially fell in with one, of Mr. Harris' meetings. When he came into the meeting-house, Mr. H. fixed his eyes upon him, being impressed previously, that he had some extraordinary message. He asked him whence he came, c. Mr. W. told him his, errand. Upon which, after some deliberation, believing him to be sent of God, Mr. H. agreed to go. Taking three days to prepare, he set out with Wyley, having no meetings on the way, yet exhorting and praying at every house where he went.

"Arriving at Culpepper, his first meeting was at Wyley's own house. He preached the first day without interruption, and made appointments for the next. But when he began his meeting, such violent opposition was made by a company, who appeared with whips, sticks, clubs and other rustic weapons, as to hinder his labors, in consequence of which he went that night over to Orange County, and preached with much effect. He continued many days preaching from place to place, attended by great crowds, and followed throughout his meetings by several persons who had been either lately converted or seriously awakened under the ministry of the Regular Baptists, and also by many who had been alarmed by his own labors. When Mr. Harris left them, he exhorted them to ire steadfast, and advised some, in whom he discovered talents, to commence the exercise: of their gifts, and to hold meetings among themselves. In this ministerial

journey, Mr. Harris sowed much good seed, which yielded afterward great increase. The young converts took his advice, and began to hold meetings every Sabbath, and almost every night in the week, taking a tobacco-house for their meeting-house. After proceeding in this way for some time, they applied to David Thomas, who lived somewhere north of the Rappahannock, to come and preach for them and teach them the ways of God more perfectly; he came, but in his preaching expressed some disapprobation of such weak and illiterate persons. This was like throwing cold water upon their flaming zeal; they took umbrage, and resolved to send once more for Mr. Harris. Sometime in the year 1766, and a short time after Mr. Thomas' preaching, three of the party, viz., Elijah Craig and two others, traveled to Mr. Harris house, in order to procure his services in Orange and the adjacent parts, to preach and baptize new converts. They found, to their surprise, that he had not been ordained to the administration of the ordinances. To remedy this inconvenience, he carried them about 60 miles into North Carolina, to James Read, by whom he was ordained.

"But little is known of the early history of Mr. Read, but from this period he became associated with Mr. Harris in his evangelical excursions, and for many years held a prominent rank among the ever active Separates."

"He, with many others of that day, was a strong believer in special teachings from heaven as to new enterprises in evangelical labors, and had, as he supposed, a warning from God of the coming of Harris and his companions, similar to that of Peter when called to go to the Gentiles. And, says Mr. Semple, we can hardly for a moment hesitate in placing implicit confidence in its being a contrivance of Divine wisdom.

"Mr. Read, of course, without hesitation, agreed to go. In about two weeks, they arrived at their place of destination and commenced their operations in the usual style of prosperity and success. But now, for the first time, signs of collision between the Regulars and Separates made their appearance, and on the Sabbath following, both parties held meetings but a small distance from each other. Baptism was administered by both. These things widened the breach. Messrs. Read and Harris, however, continued their ministrations. Mr. Read baptized nineteen the first day, and more on the days following. They went through Spottsylvania into the upper parts of Caroline, Hanover, and Goochland, sowing the seeds of grace and peace in many places. So much were they inspired by these meetings, that they made appointments to come again the next year. In their second visit, they were accompanied by the Rev. Dutton Lane, who assisted them in constituting and organizing the first Separate Baptist Church between the Rappahannock and James river; this took place on the 20th of Nov., 1767."

The church was called Upper Spottsylvania, and consisted of 25 members, including all the Separate Baptists north of James River. This was a mother to many other churches.

"Read and Harris continued to visit these parts for about three years, with wonderful effect. In one of their visits, they baptized 75 at one time, and in the course of one of their journeys, which generally lasted several weeks, they baptized upwards of 200. It was not uncommon at their great meetings, for many hundreds of men to encamp on the ground, in order to be present the next day. The night meetings, through the great work of God, continued very late; the ministers would scarcely have an opportunity to sleep. Sometimes the floor would be covered with persons struck down under the conviction of sin. It frequently happened, that when they would retire to rest at a late hour, they would be under the necessity of arising again, through the earnest cries of the penitent. There were instances of persons traveling more than one hundred miles to one of these meetings; to go forty or fifty was not uncommon.

"On account of the great increase of members through the labors of Messrs. Read and Harris, aided by a number of young preachers, it was necessary to constitute several other churches."

The young preachers referred to were Messrs. Lewis and Elijah Craig, John Waller, James Childs, John Burns, William Webber, Joseph Anthony, Reuben Ford, William Mullen, James Greenwood, and others. These young prophets, most of whom were entirely caught by the spirit of the older ones, and were the means of propagating the sentiments of the baptists to a wide extent in opposition to magistrates and mobs and all the array of a most vulgar and determined

hostility.(6)

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### **The great body of the Separates, divided into three Associations, in 1770.**

The Ketockton Association comprised the great mass of the Regular Baptist, in this State at this time; and although the two parties had gone on in a sort of arms-end harmony, the period had now arrived when a portion of each side felt a strong desire for a full and cordial union with each other.

The Regulars took the lead in this laudable effort and sent as messengers to the Separate party, Messrs. Garrard, Major, and Sanders, with a kind and conciliating letter, of which the following is an extract :

"Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

"The bearers of this letter can acquaint you with the design of writing it. Their errand is peace, and their business is a reconciliation between us, if there is any difference subsisting. If we are all christians, all baptists, all new-lights, why are we divided? Must the little appellative names, Regular and Separate, break the golden band of charity, and set the sons and daughters of Zion at variance? 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,' but how bad and how bitter it is for them to lince asunder in discord! To indulge ourselves in prejudice is soon a disorder; and to quarrel about nothing, is irregularity with a witness. O, our dear brethren, endeavor to prevent this calamity for the future."

This excellent letter was presented to the Association, and after a lengthy debate, the proposal for a union was rejected by a small majority.

Their answer to the Regulars was:

"Excuse us in love; for we are acquainted with our own order, but not so well with yours; and if there is a difference, we might ignorantly jump into that which will make us rue it," c.

This effort was made in 1769.

At the meeting of the great community of Separates in 1770, their harmony was much interrupted and their assembly assumed a new and unpleasant appearance, and the division of the Association, which convenience would have dictated, was now effected from painful necessity. It had been usual for them to do nothing in Associations but by unanimity. If, in any measure proposed, there was it single dissentient, they labored first by arguments to come to it unanimous agreement; when arguments failed, they resorted to frequent prayer, in which all joined; when both these failed, they sometimes appointed the next day for fasting and prayer, and strove to bring all to be of one mind. At this session they split in their first business; nothing could be done the first day. They appointed the next for fasting and prayer. They met and labored the whole day, and could do nothing, not even appoint a Moderator. The third day was appointed for the same purpose, and to be observed in the same way. They met early and continued together until three o'clock in the afternoon, without having accomplished anything: a proposal was then made, that the Association should be divided into three districts, that is, one in each State. To this there was a unanimous consent at once.

"The cause of this division (says Mr. Edwards) was partly for convenience, but it was chiefly owing to a mistake which this Association fell into relative to their power and jurisdiction. They carried matters so high as to unfellowship ordinations, ministers, and churches, that acted independent of them; and pleading 'that though complete power be in every church, yet every church can transfer it to an Association,' which is as much as to say that a man may take out his eyes, ears, c., and give them to another to see, hear, c., for him; for, if power be fixed by Christ in a particular church, they cannot transfer it, nay, should they formally give it away, yet it is not gone away."

The division above referred to, was made in the following manner: --

The churches in South Carolina formed an association called Congaree.

Those in North Carolina still retained the old name of Sandy Creek, while the Virginia churches united under the name of Rapid-ann, which was more generally known by the name of the General Association of Separate Baptists, which for the twelve following years embraced all the churches of the Separate order in the colony, except those which were dismissed in 1776, to form the Strawberry Association.

From this growing body, as from a fruitful mother, have originated most of the present Associations in the State.

General Association, when first set off, contained but 14 churches, which were scattered in almost as many counties, and many of them were high up in the State, both as it respects the sea-coast and the southern boundary; most of them, however, were situated on the south of James River.

In their early movements, they put a veto on all interference with the independency of the churches, and resolved, according to the old Baptist doctrine, that an Association is merely an advisory council.

In 1773 they had increased to thirty-four churches, and upwards of three thousand members, Three Baptist Apostles were ordained, in 1774.

The following query, viz.: Are all the offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, mentioned in Eph. 4 and 11, now in use? had been introduced at a previous session. Two days were spent in debating the subject, and then its decision was deferred till the next meeting. This novel subject was discussed with warmth and interest, both in their assemblies and during the recess of their session.

Jeremiah Walker and Reuben Ford, each one, wrote a pamphlet -- the first for and the other against the proposed measure. Both of these men were followed by large and respectable parties, and their productions were read in the meeting. But the apostolical succession, by a large majority, finally prevailed, and as we have before stated, the venerable Samuel Harris was solemnly invested with this high and dignified function.

"The ordination was conducted in the following manner, as appears by the Minutes of the Association: -- 'The day being set apart as a fast day, we immediately proceeded to ordain him, and the hands of every ordained minister were laid upon him.(7) Public prayer was made by John Waller, Elijah Craig, and John Williams. John Waller gave a public charge, and the whole Association gave him the right hand of fellowship.' The work assigned to this apostle, was to pervade the churches, for the purpose of performing, or, at least, superintending the work of ordination, and to set in order the things that are wanting; and he was ordered to report the success of his mission at the next Association. And for the discipline of this high officer, the following law was enacted, viz.: 'If our Messenger, or Apostle, shall transgress in any manner he shall be liable to dealing in any church where the transgression was committed; and the said church is instructed to call helps from two or three neighboring churches; and if by them found a transgressor, a general conference of all the churches shall be called, to restore, or excommunicate him.'"

At this time there was a temporary division of this extensive body, and James River was the dividing line; and the northern half; not to be outdone by the southern section, not long after, in the same year, appointed for their apostles, John Waller and Elijah Craig.

Thus Virginia, whose ecclesiastical affairs were formerly managed by Bishops, now beheld within her bounds three baptist Apostles, of what line of succession the records do not define. But these distinguished functionaries made their first report in rather discouraging terms, and no others were ever appointed.

The two divisions just referred to, reunited in the following year, when it was found that the whole number of churches amounted to 60; of which 31 were on the north, and 29 on the southern side of the river.

Disputes about doctrines. At this session, the Association was most painfully agitated, by the

discussion of the following very serious and important question, viz.

Is salvation by Christ made possible for every individual of the human race?

One whole day was spent in debating this subject, and most of the preachers took part in the debate. Those who supported the affirmative were called Arminians, the other side were denominated Calvinists.

Had these brethren been acquainted with the distinctions made by Fuller and others, of a general provision and particular application, it would have relieved them from embarrassment and altercation.

Although these discussions were continued, and the two parties had rallied around different standards in separate assemblies, yet no lasting injury ensued.

By mutual concessions and explanations, a reunion of the conflicting parties was effected during the same meeting, and they retired from the scene a united body.

In 1776. this great Association had increased to 74 churches; but the troubles and embarrassments of the war of the revolution, in a great measure checked their progress and prosperity; their meetings generally were but thinly attended, and their principal transactions appear to have consisted in making exertions to free themselves from the civil grievances and oppression under which they as a denomination labored.

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#### **Union of the Regulars and Separates in 1787.**

The schism which took place among the Regulars and Separate Baptists in 1766, soon after their rise in the State, had continued without being completely healed for about twenty years, although a friendly intercourse had been occasionally kept up amongst them. But now the happy period had arrived, in which all the dispute between these two bodies were compromised, buried and forgotten. The adjustment of these disputes was conducted by the General Committee on the part of the Separates, and on that of the Regulars by delegates for the purpose from the Ketchikan Association; and took place at the fourth session of the General Committee, which was held at Dover meeting-house in Goochland county. At this meeting, delegates from six Associations of the Separates and a number from the Ketchikan were assembled, when, pursuant to a previous appointment, the subject of the union between the Regulars and Separates was taken up, and after a brief and temperate discussion of their differences, a happy and effectual union was formed, and their party names dismissed and buried.

The objections on the part of the Separates related chiefly to matters of trivial importance, such as dress, &c., and had been for some time removed, so as to be no bar of communion. On the other hand, the Regulars complained, that the Separates were not sufficiently explicit in their principles, having never published or sanctioned any confession of faith; and that they kept within their communion many who were professed Arminians. (8) To these things it was answered, by the Separates, that a large majority of them believed as much in their confession of faith as they did themselves, although they did not entirely approve of the practice of religious societies binding themselves too strictly by confessions of faith, seeing there was danger of their finally usurping too high a place; that if there were some among them who leaned too much to the Arminian system, they were men of exemplary piety and great usefulness in the Redeemer's kingdom; and they conceived it better to bear with some diversity of opinion in doctrines, than to break with men whose Christian deportment rendered them amiable in the estimation of all true lovers of genuine godliness. Indeed, that some of them had now become fathers in the gospel, who, previous to the bias which their minds had received, had borne the brunt and heat of persecution, whose labors and sufferings God had done, and still continued to bless to the great advancement of his cause -- to exclude such as those from their communion, would be like tearing the limbs from the body.

These and such like arguments were agitated both in public and private, so that all minds were much mollified before the final and successful attempt for union was made. The terms of the

union were entered on the Minutes in the following words, viz.

"The committee appointed to consider the terms of union with our Regular brethren, reported, 'that they conceive the manner in which the regular baptist confession of faith has been received by a former Association, is the ground-work for such union.' The manner of this reception was, that they should retain their liberty with regard to the construction of some of the objectionable articles."

After considerable debate, as to the propriety of having any confession of faith at all, the report of the committee was received, with the following explanation:

"To prevent the Confession of Faith from usurping a tyrannical power over the consciences of any, we do not mean that every person is bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained; yet that it holds forth the essential truths of the gospel, and that the doctrine of salvation by Christ, and free and unmerited grace alone ought to be believed by every Christian, and maintained by every minister of the gospel. Upon these terms we are united and desire hereafter that the name of Regular and Separate be buried in oblivion, and that from henceforth we shall be known by the name of the UNITED BAPTIST CHURCHES IN VIRGINIA."

This union took place when a revival of religion had commenced, which soon broke forth on the right hand and on the left, throughout the State; "and nothing," says Mr. Semple, their historian, "could be more salutary than this conjunction of dis severed brethren, and the accommodating temper of the parties by which it was effected; and they have, from that period to the present time, most fully demonstrated that it was an union of hearts as well as parties."(9)

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## Notes

1. Semple's History of the Baptists in Virginia, passim.
2. Morgan Edwards' MS. History of the Baptists in Virginia.
3. Semple and Morgan' History of the Virginia Baptists.
4. Semple's History, c.<P>5.Semple's History, c.<P>6.Semple's History, c.<P>7.It would seem, by the above account, that those who had opposed the establishment of apostles, had retired from the Association before the offensive measure was adopted.
8. The reader must keep in mind, that in this day those were called Arminians who held to the universal provision of the gospel, or that the atonement of Christ was general in its nature.
9. History of the Virginia Baptists. Many of the preceding statements which are not formally quoted, have been taken from that work. [Semple]

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[From David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, 1848, pp. 641-652. jrd

[The footnotes are changed to endnotes and the numbers are changed to consecutive numbers.  
jrd]

## History of Virginia Baptists

### Section II

By David Benedict, 1848

**The ecclesiastical affairs of Virginia -- Laws against dissenters -- a summary view of the sufferings of the baptists under the power of the establishment -- the first instance of imprisonment -- John Blair in their favor -- Patrick Henry and others ditto -- overthrow of the National Establishment -- general assessment-great revival -- General committee -- General meeting of correspondence.**

#### THE ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS STATE.

"THE first settlers of this country were emigrants from England, of the English church, just at a point of time when it was flushed with complete victory over the religions of all other persuasions." Possessed, as they became, of the powers of making, administering, and executing the laws, they showed equal intolerance in this country with their Presbyterian brethren, who had emigrated to the northern government.

"The Episcopalians retained full possession of the country about a century. Other opinions began to creep in; and the great care of the government to support their own church having begotten an equal degree of indolence in its clergy, two-thirds of the people had become dissenters at the commencement of the revolution. The laws were still oppressive on them; but the spirit of one party had subsided into moderation, and of the other had risen to a degree of determination which commanded respect.

"The first care of the early Legislature was to provide for the church. By the first act of 1623, it was provided that in every plantation or settlement there had be a house or room set apart for the worship of God according to the canons of the Church of England, to which a, strict uniformity was enjoined.

"To preserve 'the purity of doctrine and unity of the church,' it was enacted, in 1613, that all ministers should be conformable to the orders and constitutions of the Church of England, and that no others be permitted to teach or preach publicly or privately. It was further provided, 'that the Governor and Council should take care that all non-conformists departed the colony with all conveniency.'

"The first allowance made to the ministers was ten pounds of tobacco and a bushel of corn for each titheable. which meant every laboring person, of whatever color or condition; the twentieth calf, kid, or pig was soon after added to the minister's allowance. But this law was repealed in 1633.

"Tobacco was then the staple commodity of the country, and the foundation of exchange and currency in all business transactions. Taxes, fines, and assessments of all kinds were to be paid in this article. Fines varied from one pound to one thousand."

The whole system of this first religious hierarchy in this country is found in Semple's History of the Virginia Baptists, my 2d Vol., and Henings Statutes at large.

Laws against dissenters. In 1643 the old English laws against popish recusants was enacted in this colony.

"Several acts of the Virginia Assembly, from 1659 to 63, had made it penal in their parents not to have their children baptized; and against the quakers, who were flying from persecution at home, the laws of this colony were alarmingly severe; and if no executions took place here as in New England, it was not owing to the moderation of the church or the spirit of the Legislature, as may be inferred from the law itself, but to historical circumstances which have not been handed down

to us."

As the baptists were not known in this country, in these early times, no respect was had to them in any of these severe enactments. The law compelling parents to have their children baptized, in all probability, was intended for the Quakers rather than them.

And in this respect the Virginians differed entirely from the New Englanders. In their legislation, the anabaptists were continually held in view, and their persecuting laws were framed with a special design to hinder the spread of their opinions, or drive them from the country.

Again, the New England people took especial care to pocket the fines of disobedience, for which those of the ancient dominion seemed to have, but little care.

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#### A Summary View of the Sufferings of the Baptists under the forms of Law, or without them.

The first appearance of the denomination in this country excited no alarm; most of their converts were from that class of people who were of but a small account in society; their preachers were generally illiterate; their assemblies and their efforts were in places remote and obscure, and the language of the leading men in church and State was, let them alone, they will soon fall out among themselves and come to nothing. In some places the maxim was adhered to, and persecution in a legal shape was never known. But in many others, alarmed by their rapid increase, the men in power, especially those in the lowest functions, strained every penal law in the Virginia code to obtain ways and means to put down the disturbers of the peace, as they were now called.

Although their baptisms were open and abundant, and many of their converts were from the established church, yet but little was said against them on this account. The burden of the complaints of their opposers was, that they were disturbers of the peace, as will soon appear. This was the head and front of their offending; this was the first article in all accusations, whether they came from the minister of the church or of the law, or from the rude and rustic assailants, who were notoriously irreligious and immoral, and who, as Morgan Edwards once said, had not wit enough to sin in a genteel manner.

"It seems by no means certain," says Semple, "that any law in force in Virginia authorized the imprisonment of any person for preaching. The law for the preservation of peace, however, was so interpreted as to answer this purpose; and, accordingly, whenever the preachers were apprehended, it was done by a peace warrant."

The first instance of actual imprisonment, we believe, that ever took place in Virginia, was in the county of Spottsylvania, on the 4th of June, 1768. John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs, and others, were seized by the sheriff, and hauled before three magistrates, who stood in the meeting-house yard, and who bound them, in the penalty of one thousand pounds, to appear at court two days after. At court they were arraigned as disturbers of the peace; on their trial they were vehemently accused by a certain lawyer, who said to the court, "May it please your worships, these men are great disturbers of the peace; they cannot meet a man on the road, but they ram a text of Scripture down his throat." Mr. Waller made his own and his brethren's defense so ingeniously, that they were somewhat puzzled to know how to dispose of their. They offered to release them if they would promise to preach no more in the county for a year and a day. This they refused, and therefore were sent into close jail. As they were moving on from the courthouse to the prison, through the streets of Fredericksburg, they sang the hymn,

"Broad is the road that leads to death," &c.

This solemn procession, and this bold and fearless conduct on the part of a company of men who were conscious of having committed no offence deserving such treatment, produced a prodigious effect on all who witnessed the scene, and had a powerful reaction in favor of the cause for which they suffered.

After four weeks' confinement, Lewis Craig was released from prison, and immediately went down to Williamsburg to get a release for his companions. He waited on the Deputy Governor,

the Hon. John Blair, stated the case before him, and received the following letter, directed to the King's attorney in Spottsylvania:

"Sir -- I lately received a letter, signed by a good number of worthy gentlemen who are not here, complaining of the baptists; the particulars of their misbehavior are not told any farther than their running into private houses and making dissensions. Mr. Craig and Mr. Benjamin Waller are now with me, and deny the charge. They tell me they are willing to take the oath as others have. I told them I had consulted the Attorney-General, who is of opinion that the General Court only have power to grant licenses, and therefore I referred them to the court; but, on their application to the Attorney-General, they brought me his letter, advising me to write to you: That their petition was a matter of right, and that you may not molest these conscientious people, so long as they behave themselves in a manner becoming pious Christians and in obedience to the laws, till the court, when they intend to apply for licenses, and when the gentlemen who complain may make their objections and be heard. The act of toleration (it being found by experience that persecuting dissenters increased their numbers) has given them a right to apply, in a proper manner, for licensed houses for the worship of God, according to their consciences; and I persuade myself the gentlemen will quietly overlook their meetings till the court. I am told they administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper near the manner we do, and differ in nothing from our church but in that of baptism and their renewing the ancient discipline; by which they have reformed some sinners, and brought them to be truly penitent; nay, if a man of theirs is idle, and neglects to labor and provide for his family as he ought, he incurs their censures which have had good effects. If this be their behavior, it were to be wished we had some of it among us; but, at least, I hope all men may remain quiet till court.

"I am, with great respects to the gentlemen, sir, your humble servant,

"Williamsburg, July 16, 1768. JOHN BLAIR"

This letter, so creditable to this high officer of the King, met with a cold reception from the attorney.

"Waller and the others continued in jail forty-three days, and were then discharged without any conditions. While in prison, they constantly preached through the grates; the mob without used every exertion to prevent the people from hearing, but to little purpose. Many heard, indeed, to whom the word came in demonstration of the spirit and with power.

"After their discharge, which was a kind of triumph, Waller, Craig, and their compeers in the ministry, resumed their labors with redoubled vigor, gathering fortitude from their late sufferings, thanking God they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ and his Gospel. Day and night, and, indeed, almost every day and night, they held meetings in their own and the adjacent neighborhoods. The spread of the Gospel and of baptist principles was equal to their exertions; insomuch, that in very few sections of Virginia did the baptist cause appear more formidable to its enemies, and more connoting to its friends, than in Spottsylvania; and, we may add, so it is to this day."**(10)**

"Waller was viewed as a ringleader in these offensive excitements, and was dealt with accordingly.

"Not unfrequently their leading men would attend the baptist meetings, enter into arguments with the preachers, and plead the superior claims of their church, their ministers, c.-- accuse the Baptists as false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, and close with the standing complaint, that all was quiet before those disturbers of their peace came among them.

"To these arguments, Waller and the other preachers boldly and readily replied, that if they were wolves in sheep's clothing, and they were true sheep, it was quite unaccountable that they were persecuted and cast into prison; as it is well known that wolves would destroy sheep, but, never, until them, that sheep would prey upon wolves; that their coming might indeed interrupt their peace, but certainly, if it did, it must be a false peace, bordering on destruction."

In this manner the opposition continued, until the troubles and dangers of the war of the revolution called the attention of all parties to a new field of controversy, and soon the hitherto

dominant party were glad to have the aid of dissenters in their struggle for liberty, civil and religious.

About thirty of the ministers were imprisoned, and some as many as four times each, for different periods of time, besides a number of exhorters and companions, whose only fault was their being in company with their clerical brethren.

These scenes of incarceration were generally turned to a good account by the zealous reformers; public sympathy was aroused in favor of these victims of an unwise and ill-timed opposition, and multitudes gathered around the prisons to bear the bold addresses of these fearless heralds of the era, through the iron grates, open doors, and all avenues of utterance.

In some cases, drums were beaten in the tune of service; high enclosures were erected before the prison windows by malicious opponents; matches and other suffocating materials were burnt outside the prison door. But all these malignant stratagems were of but little avail; the current continued to roll, and the obnoxious sentiments everywhere prevailed.

In the language of John Leland, who resided in the State about this time, "the dragon roared with hideous peals, but was not red; the beast appeared formidable, but was not scarlet-colored. Virginia soil has never been stained with vital blood for conscience' sake."

From the beginning, the Baptists were unremitting in their exertions to obtain liberty of conscience; they contended that they could not be imprisoned by any existing laws; that they were entitled to the same, privileges that were enjoyed by the dissenters in England. Their judges, however, decided otherwise, and as there was no regular appeal, the propriety of that decision has not been legally ascertained; the prevailing opinion in the present day is, that their imprisonment was unlawful.

In the midst of their struggles, this oppressed people were so fortunate as to secure the interest of the famous Patrick Henry, who, though a member of the State establishment, yet, being always the friend of liberty, he espoused their cause, and continued their unwavering friend until their complete emancipation was effected.

Many other men of great influence favored their cause, some from one motive, and some from another; their congregations were large, and when any of their men of talents preached they were crowded. The patient manner in which they suffered persecution, raised their reputation for piety and goodness in the estimation of a large majority of the people. Their numbers annually increased in a surprising degree. Every month new places were found by the preachers whereon to plant the Redeemer's standard. In these places but a few might become baptists, yet the majority would be favorable. Many who had expressed great hostility to them, upon forming a more close acquaintance with them, professed to be undeceived.

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#### Overthrow of the National Establishment.

Now, matters were rapidly advancing to their final issue. An unguarded heedlessness, the certain prelude of calamity and downfall, on the part of a large portion of the ministers of the establishment, who were pampered and secure amidst patronage and power, made them the easy victims of their indolence and inactivity.

On the other hand, the political revolution was rolling on with impetus force, regardless of all the vestiges of royalty in church or state. Republican principles had gained much ground, and were fast advancing to superiority; the leading men on that side viewed the established clergy and the established religion as inseparable appendages of monarchy, one of the pillars by which it was supported. The dissenters, at least the baptists, were republicans from interest as well as principle; it was known that their interest was great among the common people, and the common people in every country are, more or less, republicans. To resist British oppressions effectually, it was necessary to soothe the minds of the people by every species of policy. The dissenters were too powerful to be slighted, and too watchful to be cheated by an ineffectual sacrifice. There had been a time when they would have been satisfied to have paid their tithes, if they could have had

liberty of conscience; but now the crisis was such, that nothing less than a total overthrow of all ecclesiastical distinctions would satisfy their sanguine hopes. Having started the decaying edifice, every dissenter put to his shoulder to push it into irretrievable ruin. The revolutionary party found that the sacrifice must be made, and they made it.

General assessment. It is said, and probably with truth, that many of the members of the established church joined in the vote for its abolition, under the expectation of a general assessment, in which all would be bound to contribute for the support of religion; and as most of the men of wealth were on their side, their ministry could be easily maintained. This, it appeared in the sequel, was a vain expectation. The people having once shaken off the fetter, would not again permit themselves to be bound. Moreover the war now rising to its height, they were too much in need of funds to permit any of their resources to be devoted to any other purpose during that period; and we shall see, that when it was attempted a few years after the expiration of the war, the people set their faces against it.

The project had been previously broached, and in 1784 a bill, which had for its object the compelling of every person to contribute to some religious teacher, was introduced into the House of Delegates, under the title of "A bill establishing provisions for the teachers of the christian religion."

This bill, by a resolution of the House, was laid by to another session.

Dissenters generally took the alarm, memorials and remonstrances were circulated with great activity, and were poured into the legislature from every quarter. Rev. Reuben Ford was the bearer of one from the General Committee of the Virginia baptists, who, we believe, were the only denomination who took a uniform and open stand against the measure. Of some other parties it is said, that the laity and clergy were at variance on the subject, so as to paralyze the exertions either for or against the bill.

These remarks apply to religious societies as such. Individuals of all parties joined in the opposition, and Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, Deists, and the covetous, readily and eagerly signed the petition against it,(11) and the question was given up forever.

Rites of Matrimony. Under the old ecclesiastical establishment, no person could celebrate the rites of matrimony but a minister of the church of England, and according to the ceremonies prescribed in the book of Common Prayer.

It was not until the year 1784, that the dissenters were put on the same footing as all other persons, with respect to celebrating the rites of matrimony. By this act the marriage ceremony might be performed by any minister licensed to preach, according to the rules of the sect of which he professed to be a member The same act has been incorporated in a late revisal of the Virginia laws.

In 1798 the legislature repealed all laws vesting property in the hands of any religious sect, by which the Episcopalians were deprived of the glebes, c.,and by which all religious sects were put into a state of perfect equality, as it respected the favors of government.(12)

Great revival in 1785, and onward. Although the war of the Revolution had a salutary effect on the outward condition of the baptists, and other dissenters, yet it had an opposite influence in their spiritual affairs. All had been so much engrossed with anxious thoughts and schemes for effecting the revolution, as well as with alternate hopes and fears for the event, that they were left, at the close of that eventful struggle, in a sad condition of religious coldness and stupidity. New openings for trade and an increasing desire for worldly accumulations, had an unfavorable influence on the interest of internal piety. Some of their watchmen fell, others stumbled, and many slumbered, and many ministers of great influence removed to Kentucky and the west. Associations were but thinly attended, and business was badly conducted. The long and great declension induced many to fear that God had wholly forsaken them.

Such is the gloomy picture drawn by Mr. Semple, their historian.

"But in 1785, at the period above referred to, the set time to favor Zion had come, and as the

declension had been general, so was the revival which followed. The work commenced on James River, and spread with astonishing rapidity in different directions over most of the whole State, and as it continued for several years, there were very few churches which were not visited with its salutary influence. Thousands were added to the baptist churches, besides many who joined the Methodists, Presbyterians and other societies."

The peculiarities of this extensive work, which lasted six or seven years, are thus described by the historian so often referred to, and although the scenes may be offensive to most men of the present day, yet, as a matter of historical veracity, I feel bound to insert them:

"During the progress of this revival, scenes were exhibited somewhat extraordinary. It was not unusual to have a large proportion of the congregation prostrate on the floor, and in some instances they lost the use of their limbs. No distinct articulation could be heard, unless from those immediately by; screams, groans, shouts, and hosannas, notes of grief and joy, all at the same time, were not unfrequently heard throughout their vast assemblies. At Associations and great meetings, where there were several ministers, many of them would officiate at the same time, in different parts of the congregation, some in exhortation, some in praying for the distressed, and some in argument with opposers. At first, many of the preachers disapproved of these exercises, as being enthusiastic and extravagant, others fanned them as fire from heaven. It is not unworthy of notice, that in those congregations where preachers encouraged them to much extent, the work was more extensive, and greater numbers were added. It must also be admitted, that in many of those congregations, no little confusion and disorder arose after the revival subsided; some have accounted for this by an old maxim: -- Where much, good is done much evil will also be done; where God sows many good seeds, the enemy will sow many tares. But certain it is that many ministers, who labored earnestly to get christians into their churches, were afterwards perplexed to get hypocrites out."

"From this revival great changes took place among the baptists, some for the better, and others for the worse. Their preachers were becoming much more correct in their manner of preaching. A great many odd tones, disgusting whoops, and awkward gestures were disused. In their matter also, they had more of sound sense and strong reasoning. Their zeal was less mixed with enthusiasm, and their piety became more rational. They were much more numerous, and of course, in the eyes of the world, more respectable. Besides, they were joined by persons of much greater weight in civil society. Their congregations became more numerous than those of any other christian sect; and, in short, they might be considered, from this period, as taking the lead in matters of religion, in many places of the State. This could not but influence their manners and spirit more or less. Accordingly, a great deal of that simplicity and plainness, that rigid scrupulosity about little matters, which so happily tends to keep us at a distance from greater follies, were laid aside. Their mode of preaching also was somewhat changed. At their first entrance into the State, though not very scrupulous as to their method and language, yet they were quite correct in their views, upon all subjects of primary importance. No preachers ever held out to their hearers the nature of experimental religion more clearly and warmly. But after they had acquired a degree of respectability in the view of the world, they departed too much from this most profitable mode of preaching, and began to harp too much on opinions and disputable points. To dive deep into mysterious subjects, and to make conjectures respecting unrevealed points, looked more wise, and excited more applause, than to travel on in the old track: and this tampering with matters beyond their reach, to the neglect of plain and edifying subjects, is too common at present, with many of our preachers in this region as well as elsewhere."**(13)**

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A short Account of the Public Bodies which, in succession, here had the general oversight of the affairs of the Denomination in this State

General Committee. This body was organized in 1784, and continued its operations fifteen years, viz., until 1799, when it was dissolved.

One article in the rules of this body was, that no petition, memorial, or remonstrance, should be presented to the General Assembly, from any Association in connection with the General

Committee, without its concurrence. Such was the zeal at this time for appearing before the legislature, where they had always met with a favorable reception, that fears were entertained that the people, in their zeal for freedom, might send some unnecessary instrument of the kind, and thereby injure the cause which was now in a promising way.

Reuben Ford, John Williams, John Leland, and John Waller, appear to have been the most active in conducting the general affairs of the Virginia Baptists in these times.

General Meeting of Correspondence. This meeting, like the General Committee, was formed of Delegates from all the Associations which chose to promote it. It was organized in 1800. and continued in being about twenty years, when it was succeeded by the

BAPTIST GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA, which was formed in 1823, and has become a body of great efficiency and usefulness.

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### Notes

10. Semple's History, &c.

11. Leland's Virginia Chronicle, p. 33.

12. Most of the history of the laws of Virginia are from Hening's work, as quoted by Semple.

13. Semple's History, &c.

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[From David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, 1848, pp. 652-658. jrd]

[The footnotes are changed to endnotes and the numbers are changed to consecutive numbers.  
jrd]

## Virginia Baptist History

### Section III

By David Benedict

#### Associations

**The oldest in the State, viz.: Ketockton, and Rapid-Ann, or General -- the fifteen in Semple's history -- Dover-Rappahannock -- Portsmouth -- Middle District and its branches -- Roanoke -- Goshen -- Albemarle -- Shiloh -- Ketockton, and all the others in eastern Virginia.**

No State, south or west, furnishes such an amount of materials for general history as the Old Dominion, and nowhere in all this extensive region has the affairs of our society been so fully investigated and been made so easy of access to the historical inquirer as in the State now under consideration. This being the case, my selections from Semple and others have been so much extended, that my limits will compel me to go through this great territory with all convenient expedition. I shall merely notice the Associations which have arisen up within its bounds, and give my usual sketches, historical and statistical, of those now in existence, as much as possible in a geographical connection. For my own convenience and that of the reader, I shall divide the geographical into three sections, eastern., middle, and western. These divisions are unequal as to their geographical extent, and also as to the baptist population which they respectively contain.

Eastern Division, or Eastern Virginia. This great section of the State includes all east of the mountains, from Maryland on the north to North Carolina on the south. This, I believe, is what the people here mean by eastern Virginia; at any rate, for my present purpose, I shall adopt this geographical nomenclature. The middle or central division includes the great valley Which lies between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany mountains; and the western division, all beyond the Alleghanies to the most western boundaries of the State.

Eastern Virginia, for a long time, embraced most of the population of the State; in different portions of this region, all the companies of Baptists that I have named made their settlements, and began their operations; by them, the first churches and Associations were planted, all of which, except the Strawberry, were this side of the mountains; and as we shall see, when the account is made tap, the most of the baptist community now in Virginia is found in the eastern division. This cis-montane territory is again divided by James River, which runs through it in an eastern direction from the mountains, till it empties into the Chesapeake Bay. In old times, so far as baptist history is concerned, much use was made of this river as a line of demarcation, and when they adopted the plan of reinstating the office of apostles for the government of the Baptist church in this State, two of them were on the north and one on the south of this river.

The Ketockton Association is the oldest of the kind in Virginia, which has existed to the present time; a number of bodies which arose in early times, either have run down entirely, or were remodeled under new names.

In 1809, when Semple's History of the Virginia Baptists was published, there were fifteen Associations wholly in this State; six of them, viz: Dover, Goshen, Albemarle, Culpepper, Accomack, and Ketockton were on the north of James river. Portsmouth, Middle District, Meherrin, Appomattox, Roanoke, and Strawberry were on the southern side; New River, Greenbrier, and Union were west of the Alleghany mountains. Mayo, Holston, and Redstone had a part of their churches in this State, but most of them were in the states of N. C., Tenn., Ohio, and Pa.

I have found it somewhat difficult to satisfy my own mind, as to the collocation of the Associations in the division now under review, but have concluded to take the largest first, and then go round

with the others, in the most convenient arrangement I can make.

#### DOVER ASSOCIATION.

This great community bears date from 1783, it being one of the four branches which originated from the great body of the Separate baptists, which, at that time, by mutual agreement, divided their wide-spread fraternity.

As I shall frequently find it necessary to refer to this transaction, I shall here recapitulate what has been already stated in the preceding narratives.

The New Lights, or, as they were then denominated, the Separate Baptists, who descended from small company of New England adventurers, had, in about a quarter of a century from their commencement in Virginia, collected in one great body upwards of seventy churches; it extended over most of the State where the denomination had gained any proselytes, and had become too unwieldy for convenience or profit.

The four Associations into which this great company were divided, were Dover and Orange on the north, and Middle District and Roanoke on the south of James River.

This body took its name from a church, now very small, in the county of Goochland; it was not superior to the other divisions at first, but in process of time, its numbers were greatly augmented, so that before the Rappahannock went off froth it, they amounted to upwards of twenty thousand; its numerical strength is still very great, as it embraces the great churches in the capital, and the surrounding country.

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#### CITY OF RICHMOND

FIRST CHURCH. This body was founded in 1780, not long after the surrender of the British army under lord Cornwallis. Excepting one of the Episcopal order, this is said to be the oldest religious society in this city.

From the Church Manual of this ancient community, published this year, which I am happy to have in my possession, I shall extract its history from the beginning:

"This little band scarcely exceeded, at the time of its constitution, the apostolic number; it consisted of only fourteen members. They were united together under the pastoral care of Elder Joshua Morris, a member of Boar Swamp, from the neighborhood of which he removed to Richmond, to undertake the charge of this infant church. The congregation assembled in a building (long since removed) situated at the north-east angle formed by the junction of Cary street with Second street. Elder Morris continued his labors during several years, but subsequently removed to Kentucky.

"In 1788, Elder John Courtney took charge of the church, and his ministry appears to have been very much blessed. Could the writer have obtained the requisite documents, it would have been very pleasing to trace the gradual progress of the church; but in this he has only been able to succeed partially. About twenty years after Elder Courtney had become pastor, we find from a record preserved in Semple's History, that the number of members had increased to 560. At this time, also, there were several of the brethren licensed preachers. In the year 1810, Elder John Brice was associated with Elder Courtney; upon his resignation in 1820, Elder Andrew Broaddus sustained for a few months the same relation to the church; after which Elder Brice resumed his co-pastorate. Upon his finally removing, in 1822 Elder Henry Keeling was chosen co-pastor, and continued to discharge the duties of that office till after the decease of Elder Courtney. It was on the 18th of December, 1824, that this venerable servant of Jesus found, that while to him to live had been Christ yet to die was gain. He had faithfully served the church for thirty-six years, though bodily infirmities much diminished the frequency of his public labors, and for the two last years entirety suspended them.

"In June, 1820, about five years previous to the decease of Elder Courtney, 17 members were dismissed for the purpose of forming a second Baptist church, which, from this small beginning,

has gradually increased, till it numbers 510 members; a result which tends greatly to promote the prosperity of the denomination, and which calls for devout thankfulness to the Author of all good.

"In the month of January, 1825, Elder Keeling resigned, and in March, Elder John Kerr accepted the vacant charge. In the years 1826-7, the church was favored with a gracious revival, which resulted in the addition of above 200 members; and in 1831, during a series of protracted meetings, the labors of Elder Kerr, assisted by Elders Baptist and Fife, were blessed to an extent still more remarkable; in a period of less than twelve months, more than 500 members were added, 217 of whom were white persons.

"In the years 1831-2, a painful state of things existed, chiefly resulting from the infusion of the sentiments of Mr. A. Campbell, who, not having yet avowed the most obnoxious of his errors, had unhappily been afforded the opportunity of gradually disseminating them, by his frequently occupying the pulpit during his residence in Richmond as one of the delegates in the Convention for remodeling the Constitution of the State. The result was, the separation of above 70 members, who formed themselves into a society upon the principles they had been led to adopt, but whom the church determined not to fellowship.

"At the termination of the year 1832, Elder Kerr resigned his pastoral charge; but early in the year following, at the urgent desire of the church, partially resumed it, till they should succeed in obtaining another pastor. In May, 1833, Elder I. T. Hinton accepted that appointment. During the following winter, a protracted meeting held in conjunction with the Second church, during which, brethren Hyter, Fife, Jeter, and Coleman, labored abundantly, was attended with the divine blessing, and a considerable addition to both churches."

Rev. I. T. Hinton, now pastor of a baptist church in New Orleans, held the pastorship about two years. Successor to him was

Rev. J. B. Jeter, the present pastor. His settlement took place in January, 1836.

"In the autumn of 1841, the church having erected, at an expense of \$10,000, a spacious and convenient place of worship, relinquished their old house to the exclusive occupation of the colored people -- an arrangement which has contributed greatly to the advantage of both classes.

"In 1842, the church enjoyed an interesting revival, in which 160 members, a majority of them male, were baptized."

SECOND CHURCH. This church arose forty years after the founding of the First, viz., in 1820. It consisted at first of seventeen members, all of whom had belonged to the First Church.

Rev. David Roper was the first pastor of this body, in which office he continued about six years. Successor to him was

Rev. Jas. B. Taylor, whose pastorship extended to near the time that he went into the next body to be named, a period of about seven years.(14)

Rev. E. I. Magoon, now pastor of a church in Cincinnati, Ohio, was Mr. Taylor's immediate successor; his pastorship continued till 1846.

Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ Reynolds, the present pastor, came into office the same year. The Second church also, simultaneously with the First, created a new house of worship, about equal to that of the mother body in capacity and finish.

THIRD or GRACE STREET CHURCH. With one or two exceptions, the Third Baptist Church of Richmond was constituted of members, dismissed for the purpose, from the Second Church.

"From the year 1826 to 1833, the Second church, under the pastoral care of Elder James B. Taylor, was favored with numerous accessions, until it became a question of serious importance whether an effort should not be made to extend the influence of truth, by the formation of another church, in the northern part of the city. Accordingly, of a church meeting, held February 21st, 1833, the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, That it is expedient that exertions be made by this church to raise another church and

congregation, with a view to the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ, to worship in some suitable place to be provided, not further south than Fourth street, nor far from H street.

"At the same meeting, a committee was appointed, and then re-appointed monthly, to carry the above resolution into effect. This committee, under the guidance of Elder Henry Keeling, continued, for a series of months, to conduct social worship at private houses, until the second day of December, 1833, when eighteen individuals, fifteen of whom were from the Second church, one from the first, and two from country churches, were publicly recognized as an independent church of the Lord Jesus. The religious services were conducted in the presence of a large congregation, at the meeting-house of the Second Baptist Church. Elder Henry Keeling was chosen their pastor. A neat, comfortable house of worship, 40 by 50 feet, corner of Marshall and Second streets, was opened for the reception of the church the 19th of May, 1834. During the month of August, 1837, the pastoral relation between the church and Elder Keeling, by mutual consent, ceased to exist; and in November of the same year, Elder Lewis A. Alderson accepted the invitation to assume the duties of the pastorate. At this time, the church numbered 61. Before the close of the year 1838 the church was again destitute of a pastor, by the resignation of Elder Alderson; the number of members being 114, of whom 46 were colored persons."

Rev. James B. Taylor, then late pastor of the Second church, came into office here in 1840, where he continued about six years, when he was transferred to the secretaryship of the Southern Missionary Convention. The name of his successor, if one has been appointed, I am not able to give.

FOURTH CHURCH. The date of this body I am not able to state.

Rev. A. B. Smith the pastor in 1845.

AFRICAN CHURCH. The origin of this great community as a separate interest has already been suggested in the history of the First church. The colored members had, for a long time, been about quadruple to that of the whites. They, by mutual agreement, continued to occupy the old capacious building, where their assemblages are very large.(15)

Rev. Robert Ryland, who is the head of the Baptist Seminary in this city, which is designed ultimately for a college, has the pastoral care of this numerous congregation. The communicants alone are upwards of two thousand.

SECOND AFRICAN CHURCH. The date of this body I cannot give. Such an institution, I believe, exists in this city, and that it originated from the Second church of whites.

#### Recapitulation of the Churches in Richmond.

Churches.	Dates.	Pastors.	Members.
First Church,	1780	J. B. Jeter	503
Second Church	1820	J. L. Reynolds,	527
Third Church,	1833	_____	357
Fourth Church	_____	A. B. Smith	169
African Church	1841	R. Ryland	2,167
2d African Church,		(estimated)	300

Total 4,023 The other churches in this Association whose members amount to one hundred or more, with their pastors, are given in the note below.(16)

Very great changes have taken place during the sixty-four years which have elapsed since the Dover branch of the old General Association became a distinct organization.

The Dover church, from which this Association took its name, was planted by Samuel Harris, J. Read, J. Waller, and others, in 1773. It must have been an important establishment at the time,

and thirty years after its formation, Semple reports it at 275 members.

But by the returns on the Minutes for 1845, its membership was reduced to forty, save one.(17)

Richmond, on the other hand, which has since become the centre of operations, not only for this community, but the whole State, was then a small town of less than 2,000 inhabitants,(18) with one small infant church of our order, whose pastor had the privilege of preaching to them once a month at his own cost, as was generally the case with all pastors in that age. The churches in this Association are situated in the counties of Henrico, Hanover, Goochland, Caroline, King William, New Kent, c.

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#### RAPPAHANNOCK ASSOCIATION

Was formed from the Dover, in 1843; it came into being a full grown body, and now, in numerical strength, it is in advance of the mother institution. The circumstances attending the formation of this great, although young community, are thus related by its clerk:(19)

"Owing to the great extent and size of the old Dover Association, for many years there was a strong desire to have it divided but the difficulty of finding a proper line of separation always defeated the proposition for dividing, till the session of the Dover Association at Salem, in Caroline county, in October, 1842. A committee having been appointed at the previous session, reported that the York river, from its mouth up to its head, and then the Mattaponi, to the upper limits of the Association in Caroline county, Va., should be the lines of division between the new (or Rappahannock) Association and the Dover; thence a straight line crossing the Rappahannock River below Fredericksburg, through King George county to the Potomac River; down the Potomac to the Chesapeake Bay; in length about 120 miles, in breadth from 30 to 40. This division left the old Association with 37 churches, and the new with 35. The number now is 37."

Rev. Addison Hall was the moderator, and L. W. Allen, clerk, of the first meeting.(20)

Mr. Allen, according to the custom of the country, had the spiritual oversight, at the time he wrote me,(21) of three churches, of which he has given some historical sketches, which I regret my limits will not permit me to insert.

BRUINGTON CHURCH, Rev. R. H. Bagby, pastor in 1845, belongs to this body.

Rev. R. B. Semple, D.D., was long the pastor of this church. This body, I should judge from the report of the doings of the churches, for benevolent objects, of which returns were made in 1845, is among their most efficient communities.

The EBENEZER CHURCH, Gloucester Co., P. Taliaferro, pastor, is the largest in this body.(22)

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#### PORTSMOUTH ASSOCIATION

This body was formed by a large colony from the old Kehukee, which went off by themselves in 1790. It began with nineteen churches.

Elders J. Meglamre and David Barrow, who afterwards removed to Ky., generally officiated as moderators of this Association during the early periods of its existence.

This Association occupies the oldest baptist ground its Virginia, where the first company of the denomination made their settlement; it is situated in the south-east corner of the State, and extends front Portsmouth and Norfolk to Petersburg, along James river, mostly, if not altogether, on its southern side. The largest churches are in the places just named, and in their vicinities.

The PORTSMOUTH CHURCH was founded in 1798, with 68 members.

Rev. Thomas Armistead was the first pastor; after him, in succession, they had Josiah Bishop, a man of color, Thos. Etheredge, Jacob Grigg, Davis Biggs, and probably some others.

Rev. Thomas Hume, the present incumbent, has been in office here some ten years or more.(23)

NORFOLK CHURCH, CUMBERLAND STREET, was formed from the Portsmouth, in 1815. Semple gives a doleful account of the calamities which befel [sic] this body in its early movements, in consequence of a succession of errant and unworthy ministers who were inducted into the pastoral office.(24) The names of all the incumbents here I have not learned.

Dr. Howell, now of Nashville, Tenn., according to Allen's Register for 1833, appears to have been in this station at that date.

Rev. E. G. Robinson, now a professor in the Covington Institution, near Cincinnati, occupied this station a few years.

PETERSBURG. This town or city abounds with baptists, but of none of the churches have I gained sufficient information for the construction of my usual notices as to their dates, succession of pastors, c.

The three last pastors of the church of whites have come and gone with the quick step of modern times. Their names are J. P. Tustin, now of Warren, R. I.; J. R. Scott, the present pastor of the Hampton church, in the Dover Association; and J. C. Jordan, who has lately resigned the office.

There are three churches of colored people, which, in the aggregate, contain upwards of 2,500 members. All the information I have obtained respecting them is what appears on the Minutes of this body for 1846, and a few items communicated by Mr. Scott while he was in the town.

The FIRST AFRICAN CHURCH appears to have been the first on this ground, and arose many years before a the church of whites was formed; this is now the largest church in this Association.(25)

The three Associations, Dover, Rappahannock, and Portsmouth, whose history has been briefly related, contain together upwards of 34,000 members, being considerably over one-third of the baptist communicants in the whole of Virginia. They are situated contiguous to each other, from the city of Richmond and its vicinity, down to the Chesapeake Bay and the south-east corner of the State. The James, York, and Rappahannock rivers run through that populous portion of eastern Virginia in which this great mass of our denomination is found.

I shall now follow out, in their various ramifications, the other three branches of the old confederacy of Separate baptists, which will lead us over most of the section of the State now under review.

Although the Portsmouth Association is not exactly in this line of succession, as its pedigree is traced from the Regular Baptists of N. C., yet, on account of its contiguity with the Dover and Rappahannock, I have judged it best to give it a place in juxtaposition with them.

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#### MIDDLE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Also bears date from 1783. As that portion of the General Association which lies south of James River, composed this body at first, we should naturally expect it would be denominated the Southern district, as its churches extended quite to the line of N. C. Why the term Middle was adopted, Mr. Semple informs us was, that it lay between the Strawberry Association in the upper country, and Kehukee in the lower.

This community in its early operation spread over an extensive field, but by dividing and subdividing, and sending off new colonies in different directions, it has become circumscribed to narrow boundaries. Its churches, 16 in number, are situated mostly- in the counties of Powhatan and Chesterfield, adjoining James river; some of them are in close contact with the city of Richmond, particularly Manchester, which is directly opposite the Capitol.

THE AFRICAN CHURCH in Manchester is the largest in this body.(26)

THE MUDDY CREEK CHURCH, C. Tyree pastor, is the next in size. This church was constituted in 1774.

THE POWHATTAN CHURCH, H. W, Watkins pastor, stand, next as to numbers this bears date

from 1771.

THE SPRING CREEK CHURCH, J. Martin pastor, is also a large body. It was organized in 1790.

The fraternities which have been formed from the Middle District, I shall describe in a chronological order, beginning with the

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#### APPOMATTOX ASSOCIATION.

This body was organized in 1804. It is situated in the counties of Campbell, Charlotte, Prince Edwards, Buckingham, and Nottaway. It contains some of the oldest churches in this part of the State.

THE SHARON CHURCH, D. Witt, pastor, is the largest in this body.(27)

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#### MEHERRIN ASSOCIATION

Was formed from the Middle District, in 1804, and after maintaining a respectable standing about thirty years, it was overrun and broken up, or reduced to such a state of dilapidation, that they judged it best to dissolve their community, and begin anew. The inroads made upon them by the Campbellites or Reformers, was the cause of this change. The new institution assumed the name of

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#### CONCORD ASSOCIATION,

Which bears date from 1833; it occupies the, same ground of the old body in the counties of Charlotte, Mecklenburg, Lunenburg, c. Five churches only joined at first in the new organization, in which they were assisted by elders Kerr, J. B. Taylor, now of Richmond, and J. B. Smith, who is represented as a laborious and useful minister in this region, he being the only efficient minister permanently located within the bounds of this Association.(28)

The MOUNT LEBANON CHURCH; J. W. D. Creath, pastor, is the largest in this body.(29)

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#### ROANOKE ASSOCIATION.

This ancient community is dated 1788; some accounts describe it as one of the four branches of the old general body of Separates; others as growing out of a subdivision of the Middle District Association. At any rate it was a part and parcel of that wide-spread institution. For a long course of years it occupied a large territory adjoining N. C., mostly in the counties of Halifax and Pittsylvania; but as other Associations have been set off from it, the churches now are principally in the counties of Campbell and Bedford. A number of the churches in this old community were planted by Samuel Harris and his early associates.

The Minutes for 1845 contain brief historical sketches of all the churches of this body as it now stands, with the names of all the ministers by whom they were planted, and by whose pastoral and evangelical labors, they have been nourished and supplied.

This Association for a long time, next to the Dover, was among the largest in Virginia; many of its ministers also were men of talent and great distinction, not only within their own bounds, but in the region around, in this and the neighboring State of N. C.

We are now getting into a region of the State where the colored members are not quite equal to the whites; the proportion will continue to grow less, as we advance towards the middle and western regions.

The Mill Church, 1769, Upper Banister, 1773, Buffalo, 1776, Mt. Vernon, Halifax Co., 1787, and the head of Birch Creek, 1788, are some of the oldest in this Association.

The Lower Banister, Campbell Co., is the largest in this body.**(29a)** It bears date from 1798. Among its former pastors, have been John Jenkins, Griffith Dickinson, and Henry Fink.

Rev. Joel Hubbard, its present pastor, was settled in 1841. Mr. H. was moderator in 1845.

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#### DAN RIVER ASSOCIATION

Was constituted in 1838, of twelve churches, which were dismissed for the purpose, from the Roanoke. They are all in the county of Halifax, adjoining N. Carolina.**(30)**

This body is on ground occupied by the old new-light Separates, in the early part of their movements in this State, and contains some of the oldest churches in this section of Virginia.

COUNTRY LINE CHURCH was constituted in 1771, and Samuel Harris, of apostolic memory, was its first pastor. Successors to him have been Rev. Messrs. Echols, Dodson, Brame, Bates, Kerr, Nolin, Mills, and Faulkner.

CATAWBA is next in age, having been organized in 1773. Their pastors have been Rev. Messrs. Hill, Hall, Dodson, P. Hurt, R. Hurt, McAllister, Wills, and Poindexter.

Winn's Creek, Hunting Creek, Murterfield, Millstone, and Arbor, are all upwards of sixty years of age. As very frequent changes are made in pastoral relations, the ministers whose name have already been mentioned, have in succession ministered to these ancient bodies.

The HUNTING CREEK CHURCH, A. M. Poindexter pastor, is the largest in this body.**(31)**

HALIFAX CHURCH. This church was formed in 18\_\_ , and Rev. N. M. Poindexter, their present pastor, was then inducted into the pastoral office, in which he still continues.

The character of this Association is indicated as to benevolent objects by its annual doings. **(32)**

In this small body there are but five ordained ministers, viz., D. B. McGehee, J. G. Mills, A. M. Poindexter, J. O. Faulkner, and A. D. Ricker.**(33)**

#### STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1842, of eight churches which withdrew from the Roanoke, on account of disputes about benevolent operations. Their names were Mill, Upper Banister, Mt. Ararat, Strawberry, Union, White Thorn, Sycamore, and Stoneroad.

I have no Minutes of this Association later than 1843. Then its aggregate of members was 399.

These, I believe, are all the Associations in this direction, which ought to be included in the eastern division, according to my arrangement.

I shall now go above the famous line of demarcation, and give some sketches of the different Associational communities in the northern part of eastern Virginia.

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#### ORANGE ASSOCIATION.

This old body, as we have seen, was formed by a division of the ancient Separate confederacy in 1783, and then included all the churches which stood connected with that body in the Northern District. Its boundaries soon became so extensive, that in a few years it was divided into the Goshen, Albermarle, and Culpepper, the last of which has assumed the name of Shiloh.

A brief description of these three bodies and the branches which have gone out from them, will now be given.

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#### GOSHEN ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1792, and contained at that time all the churches in the counties of Spottsylvania,

and Louisa, together with a part of those in Caroline, Hanover, Goochland, and Orange. Their churches were fifteen, and their number of members upwards of fourteen hundred. This body is now the third in size in this State. It consists of upwards of thirty churches, most of which are large and flourishing.

The churches now are in the counties of Orange, Spottsylvania, Caroline, Louisa, Goochland, and Fluvanna.

This great body, of such superior size among the Virginia Associations, comes in contact with Dover on its N. and N. W. bounds.

The churches called Craigs, 1767; Waller's, 1769; Burrus', 1773; North Pamunkey, 1774; Licking Hole, 1776; and County Line, 1782; were the oldest which arose in this part of the State.

Rev. H. Frazer, the clerk of this body, informs me that he is not furnished with sufficient information to supply me with the history of any of the churches. The dates above given, I have ascertained from Semple's history and my 2d Vol.

The church bearing the uneuphonious appellation of Licking Hole, is the largest in this body.**(34)** In 1845 it was represented without a pastor.

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#### ALBEMARLE ASSOCIATION.

This body also bears date from 1792, as it was a branch of the old Orange; although it is a large community, and has, within its bounds some very efficient men, yet, it so happens that none of them have given me any information respecting it.**(35)**

For a rare case in this country, the dates of the churches are put down in the Minutes, as they ought always to be. In this way I learn that most of the churches are of recent origin.

This Association was small in its beginning, as appears by Semple's account of it; J. Watts, M. Dawson, B. Brugher, J. Young, W. Duncan, W. Basket, and G. Anderson were all the ministers who sustained the pastoral office. Most of the churches then were in the county from which the body took its name.

Charlottesville, the seat of the famous University which Jefferson took so much pains to get established, is within the bounds of this community, and this town contains one of its largest churches.

THE EBENEZER CHURCH, founded by O. Flowers, in 1773, is the oldest, and

MOUNT MORIAH, Samuel B. Rice pastor, is the largest in this body.**(36)** This last named community bears date from 1784. The New Prospect and Preddie's Creek churches are of about the same age.

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#### SHILOH ASSOCIATION.

This is the third community which owes its origin to the division of the old Orange, in 1792, and the name of Culpepper, which it first assumed, was exchanged for that which it now bears, in 1812. This alteration in the cognomen of this institution, was made at the instance of Elder Lewis Conner, who wished the Association to be known by a scriptural name.

The county whose name the Association originally bore, at first embraced most of its churches; they now extend into Madison, Green, Rappahannock, and a few others. This community extends quite to the Blue Ridge; some of its churches formerly were over it, but they have since been dismissed to form the Ebenezer, of which more will be said when we come to our 2d division.

Rev. Thornton Stringfellow, and Cumberland George, are pastors in this Association.

Old Culpepper, at the time when Semple's History of the Va. Baptists was prepared, was quite extensive in its boundaries, and contained a considerable number of the old churches, which

were planted by David Thomas, Samuel Harris, N. Saunders, J. Picket, E. Craig, J. Waller, J. Bedding, J. Taylor, J. Alderson, and others. Some of them I sec are still alive, and have a place in this body. A number of them have existed about three-quarters of a century; others have either become extinct, or have fallen into other communities.

MOUNT PONEY, J. C. Gordon pastor, is the largest in this body.(37)

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#### RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1835. It is a small community, which withdrew in part from the Shiloh on account of their opposition to missionary and other benevolent institutions, which they did not wish to support. It is situated in the counties of Rappahannock, Culpepper, c., under the edge of the Blue Ridge, on the head waters of the great river whose name it bears. I have added county to its name, to distinguish it from the large community whose history has already been given. They append old School to their name.

In the Minutes of 1844, they reported five churches and 365 members.

The ROBINSON RIVER CHURCH, W. C. Lauck, pastor, at the date just named, reported 137 members, and was the only one which came up to 100.

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#### KETOCKTON ASSOCIATION.

This is the oldest institution of the kind in the State, and was the fifth of associated baptists in America. The Philadelphia, Charleston, Sandy Creek, and Kehukee had been formed before it. This Association commenced with four churches, viz., Mill Creek, Smith's Creek, Ketockton, and Broadrun; all but the last were dismissed from the Philadelphia Association. Yearly meetings were held for a number of years, as was common in those days, before the name of an Association was assumed, which was in 1766. It is said by Rev. William Fristoe, who published a history of this body, that at one time the churches which had confederated with this wide-spread community were scattered over an extent of country about 300 miles in length, and 100 in breadth.

This Association acted a very conspicuous part in the affairs of the Virginia Baptists, for many years froth its commencement; it embodied the whole strength of the Regular Baptists in the State, and it was owing, in a great measure, to its influence that the union with the Separates was effected, which has already been described. It maintained a correspondence with its sister communities, personal and epistolary, on the north and South, and co-operated cordially with them in all their plans of an evangelizing character, until the new notions, which they denominated old school principles, were infused into the body.

Semple has entered largely into the history of old Ketockton, which at that time (1809) contained 36 churches and upwards of 2,000 members.

The Minutes of 1845 exhibit about one-third of its former numerical strength; its ministers at that time were Thomas Buck, S. Trott, W. C. Lauck, R. C. Leachman, Will. Marvin, Z. J. Compton, D. T. Crawford, and Joseph Furr.

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#### CORRESPONDING CONFERENCE.

This is another small body of what they call Old School Baptists, of recent origin in this region of the State. The latest Minutes I have seen are those of 1842, when it reported twelve churches and four ministers. The number of members were not reported; they are said to be about 600.(38)

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#### SALEM UNION ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1833; it was composed of a few churches which formerly belonged to the Columbia and Kettocton, and a few other Associations; but most of them were new organizations, which had been got up by the labors of Elders Wm. T. Broaddus and T. Stringfellow.

This community, although in the midst of those who oppose all the benevolent plans of modern times, as their Minutes show, enter into them in a systematic manner, and with good success. They employ a domestic missionary within their own bounds, and in the surrounding regions a part or all the year.

This Association affixes the dates of its churches to its statistical tables; from this I learn that The KETOCKTON CHURCH, 1755, J. T. Massey, **(39)** pastor, is the oldest in this connection.**(40)** BUCK MARSH, 1771, H. W. Dodge, pastor, is the next in point of age.

LONG BRANCH, 1786, B. Grimsley, pastor, and BETHEL, 1808, under the care of the same spiritual shepherd, are all the churches of any considerable size; the others are of recent origin.

Elders G. Love, T. Herndon, T. D. Herndon, and C. S. Adams, are all reported as resident members of the Long Branch church. The Bethel church is the largest in this body.**(41)** Mr. Love, the clerk of this body, has sent me a file of the Minutes from the beginning. The churches are in the counties of Frederick, Fauquier, Loudon, Clark, c.

This Association puts down on their Minutes the proportion of colored members to the whites, which are two-fifths of the whole. A number of the churches have none at all, and many others but very few.

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#### COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1819; it is in that part of Va. which lies opposite the District of Columbia, and two of its churches, viz., First Washington and Alexandria, are in that District. Some sketches of these communities have already been published; of the others I have not sufficient information to enable me to give any historical account of them. They are situated generally not far from the Potomac, in the counties of Stafford, Fairfax, Loudon, c.

The FREDERICKSBURG CHURCH, S. Smith, pastor, is the largest in this Association.**(42)**

The ministers in this body are O. B. Brown, A. H. Bennett, J. Ogelvie, S. Smith, L. Marders, and J. Baker.

This Association has adopted the commendable practice of putting the dates of the churches in the Minutes.

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#### ACCOMACK ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1809, of churches which were formerly in connection with the old Salisbury community, in Maryland.

I have no Minutes of this small body later than 1844; then it contained seven churches, four in the county of Accomack, two in Northampton, and one in Maryland.

The LOWER NORTHAMPTON CHURCH, G. G. Exall, pastor, was the largest amongst them. This small community is situated on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, and near its mouth. Elijah Baker, whose name appears in connection with the Salisbury Association, was a distinguished planter of churches on all this region, in both the States of Maryland and Virginia.

Elder George Layfield was also a minister of distinction in early times, and was the first moderator of this Association.

I will now go down and finish off my accounts of the institutions in the west and southwest parts of

this eastern section, which, for various reasons, were omitted while tracing out the genealogy of the descendants of the old company of New Light, Separates. The first I shall name is indeed from this old stock, but seemed to be a little out of my range in both of my surveys south and north.

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#### JAMES RIVER ASSOCIATION

Bears date from 1834; it is situated on both sides of this river, about midway from Richmond to the mountains, in the counties of Fluvanna and Buckingham, c.

The FORK CHURCH, FLUVANNA CO., is the largest in this body.(43)

Some one is very good to send me the Minutes; but no historical sketches have come to hand.

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#### STRAWBERRY ASSOCIATION.

This is the oldest community in the whole State, which has stood to the present time, except Ketockton. The following account I find in my 1st vol., p. 88, which was compiled partly from my own researches, but mostly from Semple's History:

"The Strawberry Association is in the neighborhood of the mountains, near the southern line of the State. It was formed in 1776, some seven years before the dissolution of the General Association, and appears to have been some of the early fruits of the Separate preachers, who went almost everywhere throughout the State preaching the gospel. The first laborers within the bounds of this Association were the two Murpheys, William and Joseph, Samuel Harris, and Dutton Lane. Several preachers were also raised up soon after the rise of the baptists in these parts, the most distinguished and the most useful of whom was Robert Stockton, who, after laboring a few years with much success in these parts, removed to Kentucky, and is now one of the principal ministers in the Green River Association in that State.

"In 1793, the Strawberry Association was divided, and the Blue Ridge became the dividing line, the churches to the west of which united under the name of the New River Association."

From this prolific institution a number of others have proceeded, as our future narratives will show.

No marks of any kind, that I can find on their tables, distinguish the ministers from the other delegates; from the reading of the Minutes, which are well got up in other respects, I learn that Jas. Leftwick, John S. Lee, \_\_\_\_\_ Johnson, C. Tyree, and T. C. Coggin are among them.

TINKER CREEK CHURCH was the largest in this body in 1844.(44)

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#### PIG RIVER ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1825; it is in the South-west corner of Eastern Virginia. All I have been able to learn of its history or character is what is said of it in Allen's Register for 1833:

"The churches in this body are located chiefly in the counties of Henry and Franklin. \* \* \* \*

"Throughout this Association, ultra or hyper-Calvinism prevails in full force; and its concomitant opposition to all the benevolent societies of the day, forms the most prominent feature in their Minutes."

By Allen's table, three years after, its membership amounted to about 700; what changes have since taken place I am not able to state.

Old-fashioned Baptists of Jesus Christ.

This very imposing title was assumed by a small company of Come-outers from all benevolent institutions, in the county of Chesterfield, a few years since. I have gained no information

respecting this very Orthodox community, excepting the following note from Rev. E. Ball:

"It is an anti-mission body, small, and growing smaller; it is located chiefly in Chesterfield county."

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Thus far, twenty-three associational confederacies have come under review; some, it is true, are very small; others are unusually large for southern institutions where its colored population in many cases greatly augments their numerical strength. On an average, they are equal, so far as numbers are concerned, to our communities in any of the States. I shall now take the middle or mountain range of baptist societies, of the description now under consideration.

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### Notes

14. The Manual of this church is dated in 1834, and, of course, there is a deficiency in historical details from that time.

15. I was in Richmond at the time this arrangement was being matured, and well remember the satisfaction which all parties seemed to feel in the measure.

16. Hampton J. R. Scott 805; Emmaus New Kent, Jos. Clopton, 613; Deep Run, R. Ford, 576; Black Creek, Hanover, J. Strake, 529; Hopeful, Hanover, S. Harris, 469, Bethesda do., T. S. Walthall, 466; Sharon, King William, J. O. Turpin, 456; Zion Williamsburgh, S. Jones, 414; Bethlehem, Hanover, \_\_\_\_\_, 334; James City, L. W. Allen, 300; Beulah, Kin William, 299; Union, Mangohick, \_\_\_\_\_, 282; Boar Swamp, Henrico, John Carter, 216; Elam, 245; Reed's, 219; Hopewell, 201; Taylorsville, S. S. Sumner, 207; Websters, \_\_\_\_\_, 209; Aquinton, \_\_\_\_\_, 159; Concord, \_\_\_\_\_, 170; Bethel, \_\_\_\_\_, 137; Goochland \_\_\_\_\_, 119; Bethlehem, Henrico, M. T. Sumner, 122; Liberty, J. P. Turner, 149; Lower College, \_\_\_\_\_, 150; Warwick, E. S. Amory, 151; Grafton, \_\_\_\_\_, 109.

17. Its number, at first, was 45.-- Semple.

18. Morse's Gazetteer. 19. Rev. L. W. Allen.

20. Mr. Hall is the father of the late Mrs. Shuck, wife of the Missionary in China.

21. He has resigned his pastoral care, and entered on an agency for the collection of funds for Richmond College.

22.

In 1845, it reported (only 90 whites) 990	Pope's Creek, _____	351
Nomini, J. Pollen,	908	Glebe Landing, P. T. Montague 358
Hanover, P. Montague,	856	Fairfields, W.H. Kirk 313
Upper Essex J. Bird	799	Pocorone, J. Spencer, 340
Wicomico, A. Hall	742	Jerusalem, E. L. Williams, 304
Matthews, L. W. Allen	730	Olivet, T. B. Evens, 337
Upper King and Queen, A. Broaddus,	698	Petsworth, P. Taliaferro, 259
Lower do., Wm. Todd	271	Clark's Neck, Geo. Northam 220
Piscataway, P. Montague	585	Exall, Wm. Todd 173
Enon, W. A. Baynham	590	Farnham, W. H. Kirk 172
Bruington, R. H. Bagby,	472	Providence, R. W. Cole, 166
Mattaponi Wm. Todd,	416	Round Hill 169
Moratico, A. Hall	402	Rappahannock, J. Pullen 139

Upper Zion R.W. Cole,	402	Lebanon, A. Hall	111
Salem, A. Broaddus,	373	Gibeon, ----	107
Zoar, G. Northam,	363	Menokin, R. H. Sedgewick,	104

But three of the churches in this body are under 100, and these, in aggregate, amount to just that number. The colored members are nearly two-thirds of the whole Association.

23. No information of the modern history of this community have; I been able to obtain. Semple's account of it, up to 1809, is sufficiently minute. This church, at that date, according to Semple, reported upwards of two thousand members. It then probably embraced all the colored members in this and the neighboring places, who have since organized by themselves.

24. History, c.,p. 354.

25. In 1845 it reported 1393; Second African, or Gillfield, in this town, 1119. As the ministers are not distinguished from the other delegates on the Minutes but are put in a separate list, I cannot name them in connection with the churches as I usually have done. I shall, therefore, go on with my statistics, naming the churches only.

Portsmouth, 617; Norfolk, colored, 590; Norfolk, 408; Shoulders' Hill, 265; Mill Swamp, 230; Tucker's Swamp, 223; Beaver Dam, 212; Petersburg, 210; Raccoon Swamp, 193; Suffolk, 189; Western Branch, 182; High Hills, 181; Black Creek, 172; South Quay, 166; Newville, 135; Moore's Swamp, 131; Black Water, 126; North-West, 121; Brandon, 109.

26. In 1846, it reported 487; Muddy Creek, 405; Powhattan, 385; Spring Creek, 330; Mount Tabor, J. Johns, 316; Bethel B. C. Hancock, 163; Mount Hermon, S. Dorsett, 143; Tomahawk, \_\_\_\_\_, 112; Hepzibah, 108; Union, L.D. Horner, 100.

27. In 1845, it reported 436; Nottaway, ---, 399; Red Oak, J. G. Hanmer, 351; Moringford, 250; New Salem, E. W. Roach, 161; Providence, ---, 163; Farmville, J. W. Goodman, 152; Appomattox A. A. Baldwin, 136; Brookneal, ---, 133; Ash Camp, ---, 134; Spring Creek, ---, 111; Stonewall, ---, 107; Midway, ---, 103.

28. Letter of Rev. C. F. Burnby, to the author.

29. In 1844 it reported 275; James Square, J. Delk 193; Blue Stone, J. B. Smith, 178; Reedy Creek, W. H. Maddox, 163; Cool Spring, \_\_\_\_\_, 141; Fountain Creek, J. C. Bailey, 131; Concord, ---, 1241; Cut's Bank, ---, 104; Mercy Seat, ---, 101.

29a. 1845, it, reported 198; Mount Vernon, Halifax Co., ---, 191; Danville, J. L. Pritchard, 185; Head of Birch Creek, ---, 160; Ellis' Creek, ---, 157; Sandy Creek ---, 140; Strait Stone, J. T. McLaughlin, 139; Childry, J. L. Morton 132; Republican, ---, 121.

30 Letter of Rev. D. B. McGehee, to the author.

31 In 1845, it reported 190; Arbor, 176; Cross Roads, 162; Hyco, 157; Black Walnut, 133; Mill Stone, 116; Clover, 110; County Line, 102.

32. The whole amount of contributions the first year for benevolent institutions, and to defray expenses was \$548.29. Since then, there has been some falling off, which my correspondent ascribes partly to the pressure of the times, but, mostly, to the fact of a number of the churches having new houses of worship under way, which requires the utmost of their ability to sustain. -- Rev. Mr, McGehee's letter, c</l>.

33. Their names are placed according to seniority as to ordination. -- Mr. McGehee's letter, &c.

34.

In 1845, it reported	1036	Good Hope, J. N. Herndon,	235
Burris', S. Harris,	543	Fosters Creek	210
Waller's', C. A. Lewis,	465	Upper Gold Mine	210

Liberty, L. Battaile,	457	Zion	204
Bethany, W. R. Powell	433	Mount Pisgah	169
Massaponak, J. A. Billingsly	410	Mine Road	165
Williams', J. Fife	405	North Pamunkey	165
County Line	392	Beaver Dam	144
Zoar, J. C. Gordon,	300	Bethel	130
Lower Gold Mine, W. Y. Hiter,	295	Wilderness	129
L. Creek, H. Frazer,	274	Antioch, J. A. Mansfield	129
Lyle's, R. Lilly,	269	Round Oak,	119
Little River, B. Philips	247	Bybee's Roads	112

Mount Hermon, J. S. Powell 237 Fork 107 Most of the churches have pastors named against them twice, but my plan will be, for the future, through all the south and west, where ministers have the care of a number of churches, to give their names but once.

35. I will give the clerk, Alex. P. Abell, Esq., the credit of sending the Minutes very punctually, but I wish that he or some one else had done more.

36. In 1846, it reported 467; Charlottesville, S. H. Mirick, 405; New Prospect, J. Davis, 398; Pine Grove, J. Fife, 335; Preddies' Creek, 246; Mount Ep., J. H. Fox, 239; Liberty, G. C. Trevillian, 226; Escol, ---, 213; Piney River, ---, 211; Ballenger's Creek, C. Wingfield, 198; Ebenezer, ---, 164; Adiel, ---, 161; Mount Shiloh, ---, 154; Scottsville, ---, 157; Beaver Dam, S. Eastin, 129; Chestnut Grove, ---, 112.

37. In 1846, it reported 362; F. T. S. Bruce, 334; Gourd Vine, J. Garnett, 321; Stevensburg, T. Stringfellow, 206; Mount Salem, C. George, 194; Hedgeman R., 171; Crooked Run, 143; Carter Run, 132; Blue Run, E. G. Ship, 132; Swift Run, P. Creel, 128; Bethel, 117; Cedar Run, 116.

38. This I have ascertained from Mr. Sands, of the Religious Herald.

39. He is the brother to Joseph Massey, who studied at Newton, and was some time pastor of the church in Bellingham, Mass. -- J. N. Brown.

40. This is so called from a creek on which it is situated; it was one of the constituent members of the oldest Association in the State, which is still in being.

41. In 1846, it reported 265; Long Branch, 248; Liberty, T. D. Herndon 123; Buck Marsh, 122.

42. In 1846, it reported 231; Modest Town, W. Sands, 185, Red Bank, 164; Pungoteague, 149.

43. In 1846 it reported 608; Buckingham, 484; Liberty Chapel, 245; Sharon, 211; Liberty, 191; Cumberland, 181; New Hope, 163; Tar Wallet, 115; Enon, 98.

44. It then reported 162; H. G. Creek, 154; Beaver Dam, 143; D. Creels, 126; Hunting Creek, 125; Timber Ridge 112; Goose Creek, 110.

In the Minutes of this old fraternity for 1844, I find the following item: --

"Brother Lee is requested to write a history of this Association from its constitution, as far as he can obtain documents for that purpose, and send such history to Brother David M Benedict of Pawtucket, R. I., as soon as he can accomplish the work."

The article, if forwarded, must have miscarried, as no account of the modern affairs of this body have been received, and I have no Minutes later than 1844. It is situated in the counties of Bedford, Campbell, and Roanoke. =====

[From David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, 1848; rpt. 1977, pp. 659-676. jrd]

[The footnotes are changed to endnotes and the numbers are changed to consecutive numbers.  
jrd]

## Virginia Baptist History

### IV

By David Benedict

#### Middle Division

#### Paterson Creek Association -- Ebenezer do.-- Valley -- Greenbrier -- New River -- Washington -- Lebanon.

In this Division I include all the Associations in the great valley which lies between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany mountains, and also in the mountain districts. The extensive territory embraced in this central portion of Virginia, begins with Maryland on the north, and runs in a south-western direction the whole width of the State, to North Carolina on the south. I shall begin at the upper end, and take the Associations, as much as possible, in a geographical connection.

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#### PATERSON'S CREEK ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1827, and is, I believe, the most northern community of our denomination in the division now under review; one of the churches is in Alleghany Co., Md. No accounts of it, either historical or statistical, have I been able to obtain for more than ten years past, when its number of members did not amount to two hundred.

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#### EBENEZER ASSOCIATION

Was organized in 1828, with ten churches, which were dismissed for the purpose, from the Shiloh fraternity, formerly called Culpepper. This took off one-third of the churches from the mother body. The measure was adopted by mutual agreement. The Blue Ridge became the dividing line, and the body was formed at the west of it.(45)

This community contains eleven churches, mostly small, and between three and four hundred members. It is in the counties of Page, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Pendleton, and Hardy. The ministers named as pastors in the last Minutes, were Rev. Messrs. A. C. Booten, J. Jerkins. R. Garrett, C. Keyser and J. Duval.

MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH, A. C. Booten pastor, is the largest in this Association.(46)

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#### VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Was formed from old Strawberry, in 1841; it began with 16 churches, and 1000 members. A. C. Dempsey, J. N. Johnson, C. Tyree, J. G. Thompson, and W. H. Hayhurst, took the lead in getting up this new interest.(47)

"The Natural Bridge of Virginia is about the local centre of this Association. The Association nearest is the Strawberry, 30 miles south-east of us, the other side of the Blue Ridge. The Greenbrier, on the N. W., is in the valley (or middle section) of Virginia, at a distance of 60 or 70 miles.(48)

\* \* \* \*

"This valley was settled about 100 years ago, by emigrants, via Pennsylvania from the north of Ireland, and Germany. Most of them were Scotch, and Irish Presbyterians, who have maintained their preponderance. From Lexington down to Winchester, there is but one baptist church (at Harrisonburg), and that was formed, I think, last year."(49)

\* \* \* \*

This communication from Mr. Brown, contains all the information I have obtained relative to this young community, except what I gather from their Minutes, which are deficient in some material points; -- the ministers are not distinguished from the other delegates, nor are the counties named against the churches. Some of them I gather from the places where their sessions were held, and other incidental notices are in Botetourt and Rockbridge.

The church called Cowpasture is the largest in this body.(50)

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#### GREENBRIER ASSOCIATION

Was organized in 1807, of but four churches, all of them young and small.

The origin of the baptists in this region is thus given, in documents referred to below:(51)

"Early in the year 1777, Elder John Alderson, who became an apostle in western Virginia, settled on the ground where this Association arose, while it was in a new and uncultivated condition in every point of view."

"On reaching Jackson's river, he learned that the Indians, had attacked the horse of Col. James Graham, in Greenbrier, and had killed one of the family, and taken another prisoner; in consequence of which he remained there some two or three months, reaching the place of destination some time in October.(52) His first location was in Jerrett's Fort, on Wolf creek, now Munroe [Monroe] county. Soon after, he settled on the bank of Greenbrier river, where he opened a farm, and often followed the plough with a gun swung from his shoulder. In a little time he was enabled to collect together as many as twelve members, himself and wife included. They considered themselves as a branch of the Lynville Creek church, in Rockingham Co., of which Mr. Alderson had been pastor, but it transacted business as a separate body. On the 24th of November, 1781, they were regularly constituted into a church, called the Greenbrier Baptist Church, and the following year they connected themselves with the Ketockton Association.

"At this time the members were very in much scattered over the country, some living more than twenty miles from the location of the church. Agreeable with an order of the church, the pastor, in company with other members designated, held church meetings in different sections. Occasionally, such meetings were field at Second Creek Gap, in Big Levels, above Lewisburg and on New river.

"Notwithstanding the members were so dispersed, measures were taken to build a house for public worship as early as June 1783; and in May following, the ground on which the Greenbrier Baptist meeting-house now stands was fixed upon as a suitable location. In July following, the meeting-house was so nearly completed as to be used for public worship. This was the first meeting-house in all this part of Virginia."

Such was the introduction of this apostle of the baptists in western Virginia.(53)

The Indian depredations above referred to, continued a number of years; the inhabitants, for their mutual protection, mostly resided in forts; and from one to another, protected by a small guard through the woods, this zealous and laborious minister traveled in pursuit of his dangerous and arduous vocation. In some of the forts he was received with kindness and heard with attention, while in others, the rough mountaineers, notwithstanding their perilous condition, threatened to exclude him front their rude defenses, and leave him exposed to the merciless savages, who were continually prowling around them. Such a barbarous policy, however, was never carried into effect.

Under all the disadvantages of such a peculiar location, and amidst all the dangers and privations of a pioneer life on a mountainous and most rugged frontier for seven long years, Mr. Alderson labored on without ever seeing one minister of his own order, and but very few of any other.

At length, Elders James Johnson, and Josiah Osbourne came to his aid, and by these three ministers, the Greenbrier Association was formed; James Ellison and Edward Hughes, were soon

after added to the number of this little band of baptists elders; the three last of whom were raised up in the newly formed churches in this region.

Elder Alderson continued his ministry in this wide field of labor about forty years, and closed a long life in the full confidence of his brethren, in 1816.

Greenbrier for many years at first became a nursery for the western States, which made such frequent drafts on their numbers, that although they were favored with continual additions, they but little more than held their own. But their branches were extended until, in about ten years from their commencement, they had gone down the river Kanawha; and their branches reached to the farthest extremities of the State, and came in contact with the, Ohio and Kentucky lines.

This Association very early became identified with missionary operations; first with the Triennial Convention, and next with the General Association of Virginia, while as yet the whole region of country was considered missionary ground. A reciprocity of feeling and action has long been maintained between this well regulated branch, and the General Association, and probably in few parts of the State has the General body seen their efforts and disbursements operate with more decided success.

Rev. Josiah Osbourne,(54) as has already been mentioned, was one of the three ministers by whom this body was organized; he was also the moderator of the first meeting, and often afterwards officiated as clerk.

The decidedly missionary character of this Association, is ascribed to a visit made there by Rev. Luther Rice, in 1816. The venerable Alderson received him with the greatest cordiality and joy, and introduced him to the body then in session; and from that period it has maintained a missionary spirit.(55)

This body was never large, compared with some of the Associations in the middle and in the eastern districts, but it has always been in a sound and progressive condition, and now holds a rank among the most decided friends of all the principles and institutions which their brethren delight to promote.

Their ministers at present (1845) consist of ten; six ordained and four licentiates, viz.: Messrs. Remley, Ellison, Margrave, Woodson, Chandler, Bibb, Alderson, Wood, Corron, Woodson, and Bragg.

Rev. John Spotts, a ruling elder of the Presbyterian church of Lewisburg, within the bounds of this Association, in 1831 united with the baptists; soon after he became a minister, and for upwards of seven years was one of their highly esteemed and useful men. He died at the age of forty-six, April, 1838.

Mr. Spotts was a distinguished promoter of Sunday schools, both as a Presbyterian and a baptist. He was the first who made a successful effort in this cause in this part of Virginia, and for sixteen years he was a zealous and successful superintendent in this department. And it is a remarkable fact, that no less than twenty-one of the scholars who had been under his care, became ministers of the gospel, one of whom was Rev. Mr. Shuck, now a missionary in China. In this remote region originated this successful missionary. By the Lewisburg church he was licensed to preach, and in the Seminary now called Richmond college, his studies were pursued preparatory to his present employment.

Mr. Spotts was also distinguished for an early attention to the temperance cause; and in 1828, only four years after the formation of the first temperance society in the U. S., he was president of an institution of this kind in Lewisburg.(56)

This body, after having been drawn upon at different points for materials for new organizations, at present is confined mostly to the county of the same name; some of its churches appear to be in Monroe and Nicholas, and perhaps some others. There is a want of explicitness on this subject in their Minutes.

In the Minutes for 1844, is a table which exhibits in different columns the progress of this old body, for 43 years, viz.: from 1801, the time of its full organization to that date, showing for each

year the following items -- At what place it convened -- who preached the introductory sermon -- the Moderators -- No. of Churches -- do. baptized total. It began with 177; had increased to about four hundred: when the Teay's Valley was formed it was reduced to 148, but in a few years it regained its numerical strength, and notwithstanding all the drafts upon it in favor of new interests, has steadily increased to the present time. The highest number baptized in one year war, 149 -- that was in 1832.

The moderators had been Josiah Osbourne, James Johnston, John Alderson, James Ellison, Robert Teasdale, Johnston Keaton, Eli Ball, Wm. C. Ligon, John Spotts, and Joseph Alderson. The two Aldersons, father and son, presided over this body twenty-two years.

THE GREENBRIER CHURCH, L. A. Alderson pastor, is the largest in this body. (57)

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#### NEW RIVER ASSOCIATION

Was formed by a colony from the Strawberry, in 1793. The Blue Ridge was the dividing line, and the churches in this then new formation were all to the west of it. This community was small at its commencement, and never appears to have attained to any considerable numerical strength.

Its churches are in the counties of Floyd, Grayson, and Patrick. I have seen no Minutes of this body later than 1844; at that time they amounted to 16. In none of them did the membership amount to one hundred.

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#### WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION.

This body originated from the Holston, in Tenn., near the line of which it is situated, and was organized in 1811. The ministers on this ground at that time, and who promoted the planting of it, were George Brown Thomas Colby, Edward Kelly, David Jessee, Stephen Wheeler, Jos. Foley, Alonzo Kizer, and William Lazell.

This Association occupied an important position in this lower region of the State for a long course of years, and went on with harmony and prosperity, until a portion of their members attempted to mould them to the new effort policy; this miserable plan threw them into trouble, and in the end led to the formation of a new interest, by the name of the

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#### LEBANON ASSOCIATION.

Which bears date from May 1846; the Convention, which met for consultation on the expediency of attempting a new organization out of the old Community, set forth their reasons for their doings in the following

#### CIRCULAR

To the churches which I shall here insert. It will serve as a specimen of the rending and distracting course which has been pursued in too many places in the south and west.

"Dear Brethren": -- A crisis has arrived in the history of the Washington Association. At its late meeting, the Constitution has been wantonly violated, by establishing a new test, which we consider contrary to the word of God in its character, and intolerant and oppressive in its operation. The 6th Article of the Constitution says: -- 'New Churches may be admitted into the Union, who shall petition by Letter and Delegates; and if found upon examination orthodox and orderly, shall be received by the Association, and manifested by the Moderator giving the right hand of fellowship.' Such a Church presented itself at its late meeting. It was admitted that it had been regularly constituted of members in good standing, and they set forth, in their communication to the Association, a declaration of those doctrines which have been adopted by that body as orthodox. Yet, strange as it may appear, this Church (the Church recently organized at Marion), was rejected, and its members refused a seat in the Association, solely because the Church favored missionary operations, and its Pastor, (Elder N. C. Baldwin), had received an

appointment from the General Association of Virginia. This must appear, to every unprejudiced mind, a palpable violation of the Constitution. And it is certainly known that, in the former actions of the Association, missionary or anti-missionary sentiments have never been known as a test of fellowship, or a condition of its privileges. In addition to this, all correspondents from sister Associations, who favored missionary enterprises, were on that account rejected. The Holston Association, from which this body originated, and with whom an uninterrupted correspondence has been maintained ever since the Washington Association was first organized, sent an affectionate Letter of Correspondence, by the hands of several well known brethren who have always, before this time, been most cordially greeted. These brethren were rejected, because they, and the body to which they belong, were identified with missionary operations. The General Agent of the General Association of Virginia reported himself as a correspondent from that body, and was rejected on the same account.

"On the other hand, a letter was presented from the Mountain Association; in which that body arrogantly required the Washington Association to dissolve its connection with the Ketockton Association and the Greenbrier Association, and all other bodies which have any connection with the benevolent enterprises of the day, or else they (the Mountain Association) will maintain, no further correspondence with them. This letter and these correspondents were received, and a correspondence continued. This is not all. A correspondence was also opened with the New River Association, which it is well known has long since declared non-fellowship with all those who are engaged in the missionary enterprise, and is distinguished for its inveterate hostility to almost every thing that is calculated to elevate the human character, and better the condition of our race. While these acts were done by a majority of the Association present on this occasion, we are confident that it is not a representation of the sentiments and wishes of a majority of our Churches. And we consider that the action of this body is a virtual declaration of non-fellowship with those of our own Association, who favor those enterprises, out of account of which the corresponding brethren were rejected. Being deeply grieved on account of these unconstitutional and intolerant measures, a number of the brethren convened at Lebanon, as you see from the above Minutes, for the purpose of adopting measures for the restoration of peace to our Churches, and the maintenance of our rights as men and as Christians.

"And now, dear brethren, we have laid before you our grievances, entertaining the assurance that there will be found many Churches and brethren whose sympathies are with us, and who will promptly respond to our call, by sending up a delegation to the meeting proposed above. We are assured that there are many, and we believe a large majority of the churches, who will not consent to rudely tear asunder long cherished bonds of union and affection with sister Associations and with Ministers of our own body, simply because they are doing something to send the Light of Life into the dark corners of our own country, and to the benighted heathen. And we trust that there are very many, who will not suffer themselves to be hindered in their cooperation in this glorious work of Christian philanthropy, by intermeddlers, who not only do nothing themselves, but deride and oppose those who would work for God. We earnestly request that you seriously and prayerfully consider these things. Consider the claims that the cause of our Master, and the wants and woes of a perishing world have upon the Christian Church, and take such action in this matter as duty dictates.

"Grace, mercy and peace be multiplied.

"Your brethren and companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

"NOAH C. BALDWIN,

"ELISHA MARTIN,

"LEWIS B. DULANY, <I>Committee</I>.

The first session of the new institution, which the brethren were obliged to form, or leave the ground to be given up to the arbitrary dictation of the opposers of all benevolent societies, was held in Sept. following. It began with eleven churches, five ministers, and upwards of five hundred members. The old body, at the time of the division, contained about fifteen hundred members. I have not had their Minutes since Sept., 1845, but it must of course be minus that number. The

largest at that time was

CASTLE WOOD, Russel Co., David Jessee, Sen., pastor.(58)

Red Hill, Scott Co., E. Martin pastor, with others have gone off wholly, or in part, in the new organization.

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### Notes

45. Letter of Wm. Slaughter, Jun., Esq., clerk of the Shiloh Association.

46. In the Minutes of 1845, it reported 113; Hawks - bill, C. Keyser, 96.

47. Communication from Rev. J. Newton Brown, of Lexington, 1847.

48. The Natural Bridge over Cedar Creek, is twelve miles south of Lexington, and is a great curiosity. The river runs through a chasm which is 90 feet wide at the top. The sides are 250 feet high, and almost perpendicular. The bridge is a huge rock thrown across this chasm at the top. It is 60 feet wide, and covered with earth and trees, and forms a sublime spectacle when beheld from the margin of the creek. Morse's Gazetteer.

49. Letter of Rev. J. N. Brown, of Lexington, to the author, 1847.

50. In 1846, it reported 213; Natural Bridge, 189; Zion's Hill, 161; Fincastle, 154; Catawba, 150.

51. Historical sketch of the Greenbrier Association prepared by Joseph Adelson, Esq., the present moderator, at the request of the body. -- Semple's History, Taylor's Biography of Virginia baptist ministers.

52. Mr. Alderson had made three visits to this country previous to his removal to it, and baptized three persons, two of whom, were John Griffith and Mrs. Kenny.

53. The seat of this body is 250 miles west of Richmond.

54. This was the author of a treatise on baptism entitled David and Goliath [Goliath], referred to in my article on baptism.

55. Historical Sketches, &c.

56. The biography of this distinguished man, as well as that of his father, will be more fully given in my biographical work.

57. In 1846, it reported 155; Hopewell, 147; Red Sulphur, 145; Guyandotte, 100.

58. It then reported 225; New Garden, J. Wallis, 119; Copper Creek, 112; St. Clair's Bottom 103; all the others are under 100. The largest church in the now connection, is Castle wood, 110; as this is less than one-half of the former number, I infer that there has been a division at home, this, and probably in a number of the other churches.

Lewis B. Dulaney, Esq., of Estillville, Scott Co., is my principal correspondent for this region the State; he has given me a minute account of the colored members in the old Washington community as it stood before the division, amounting, in all, to but 76, out of upwards of 1500. Some of the churches had but one or two, a number none at all.

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[Taken from David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, 1848; rpt, 1977, pp. 672-676. jrd]

[Editor's note: The book lists this as section IV, the same as the last section; the error is corrected here. The footnotes are changed to endnotes and the numbers are changed to consecutive numbers.]

## Virginia Baptist History

### Section V

By David Benedict

#### Western Division

**Union Association -- Broad Run -- Parkersburg -- Teay's Valley -- Pocatalico -- Tygart's Valley -- Indian Creek -- General Association -- Closing remarks -- Correspondents.**

This Western Division of Virginia, although of very great extent as to its geographical boundaries, yet the numerical strength in it is small compared with that on the east of the mountains.

I shall begin in what is sometimes denominated N. W. Virginia, near the Pennsylvania line; here the denomination seems first to have made their settlement, and gathered the first churches; from this point, they have branched out in different directions until they have planted their principles and institutions in almost all parts of this end of the State.

What has been said of western Pennsylvania beyond the mountains, three-fourths of a century since, as to its wild and desolate condition, the difficulties and dangers to be encountered from the savage cruelty of the aborigines of the country, and its almost entire destitution of any religious, and especially baptist institutions, will apply to the portion of this ancient coin commonwealth now under consideration. And, to the influence of John and James Sutton, John Corbly, and their associates, whose history has been given among the pioneers of western Pennsylvania, are the baptists indebted for laying the foundation of the first churches of the order in this flourishing section of the State.(59)

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#### UNION ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1804. This is the oldest and most efficient body in this region. At its organization it consisted of the ten following churches, all of which had been dismissed for the purpose, from the old Red Stone, of Pennsylvania. Their names were, Pricket's Creek, Buchanan, Little Bethel, Sandy Creek, Salem Union, Olive Branch, Wellsfork, and Gethsemane, in all of which were but a little more than one hundred members.

Their ministers, at first, were Isaac Morris, John Dunham, Joshua Hinckman, and Phineas Wells; C. Huff; J. Gawthorp, J. Currey, Wm. and J. Davidson, L. Howell, C. Wheeler, C. Keys, C. Parker, T. Swiger, J. Cather, J. Wrightman, J. Thomas, Thos. Martin, J. J. Waldo, J.M. Chapman, J. W. B. Tisdale, J. H. Goss, P. W. Holden, were their coadjutors or successors in this view field of labor. Most of these men are still alive.

Some of the churches of this community are the oldest in the country, of a few of them only can I give any historical sketches.

SIMPSON'S CREEK CHURCH is the oldest in this community, having been formed in 1774.

Rev. John Sutton was their first pastor. Since him, they have had Rev. Messrs. Isaac Edwards, Joseph Davis, John Corbly, Phineas Wells, Jesse W. Goss, A. J. Garrett, and M. Maddox.

PRICKET'S CREEK and BUCHANAN are the next in age, both having been organized in 1786.

WESTFORK was formed in 1801. J. Hinckman was one of their early its ministers.

Rev. J. L. Howell is their present pastor.

BEULAH, in Pruntytown, was formed in 1818. This is the seat, of Rector College, a young institution which arose out of an education society; it was organized a few years since, within the bounds of this Association. This church is the largest in this body.**(60)**

Rev. C. Huff, late pastor of this church, came into office in 1833, in which he continued a number of years. Before this, they had been supplied by elders Goss, Bailey, Hinckman, and Currey.

Rev. C. Wheeler, the president of the college, was its pastor in 1846.

Revival seasons have often been experienced by this body, as well as other churches in this community, and a number of ministerial sons leave been nurtured within her bounds.

A number of other ministers reside here, who officiate at the college or with the neighboring churches.

In 1809, according to Semple, this Association was in the counties of Harrison, Randolph, and Monongahela; new counties have since been formed, and considerable changes by dismissions and additions have taken place in its boundaries, and no pains is taken on the Minutes as to counties; but from what I can spell out, Preston, and probably some other counties, embrace a portion of the churches.

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#### BROAD RUN ASSOCIATION

Is a branch of the Union, and was organized in 1835, of twelve churches, and about 700 members. The principal ministers at the time of its constitution, were three brothers by the name of Holden: Alexander C., Benjamin, and Peter W.; Anthony J. Garret, Joseph Barnet, and James S. Griffin.

Since then there has been added to their number, Matthew Maddox, Abram Haynes, Samuel Alton, Carr Bailey, Timothy Maxon, George W. Dacon, and J. Woofter.

A number of ministers of this body have been under the patronage of the General Association of Virginia, from the time of its constitution; the good effect of which has been experienced in the rise of new churches, and the enlargement of those which were already established.

BROAD RUN CHURCH, organized in 1804, is the oldest in this community.

Rev. J. J. Waldo was its first pastor, and continued in office upwards of thirty years. "Although an ordinary preacher in point of talents, he was greatly beloved by those who attended his ministry, and especially the members of the church; and his congregations were always large. He was renowned for his activity in stirring up the members to their duty, and exciting them to a healthy action in their holy vocation."**(61)**

This church has been the mother of others, and a nursery of ministers. From it have been set off, wholly or in part, Freeman's Creek, Elam, and Hacker's Creek; and she has sent out into the ministry Rev. Messrs. J. Bailey, B. Holden, A. J. Garret, and M. Maddox.

One worthy old deacon is the only member yet alive, who united in its constitution.

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#### PARKERSBURG ASSOCIATION

Was organized in 1821; the town from which it took its name is situated on the Ohio River, in the county of Wood, and probably some others. Although this body has stood so many years, yet its numerical strength is very small. The ministers are Geo. C. Sedwick, Enoch Rector, Henry Dye, Wm. C. Barren, and Isaac McDermond.

PARKERSBURG CHURCH, 1819, Geo. C. Sedwick pastor, is the largest in this body, and the only one whose membership amounts to 100. The churches generally are of recent origin.

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#### TEAYS' VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1812, by a division of the Greenbrier, then very feeble and young. But the remote situation of a number of the churches, and the great inconvenience of attending the annual sessions, furnished arguments with the distant brethren, which finally prevailed, although much against the wishes of elder Alderson, the founder of this old institution.

The whole number of churches was but twelve, seven of which went off with the new body.

This Association is still farther westward, and is in the counties of Logan, Cabell, c.

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#### POCATALICO ASSOCIATION.

This is another of the small bodies in this wide spread field, which split off from the Teays' Valley in 1835, on the principles of benevolence. The chief cause assigned for their separation was, that the mother body had become a member of the General Association of Virginia. It is in the counties of Kanawha, and some adjoining ones.

DAVIS' CREEK, is the largest church in this body. In 1845 it reported 152; the others are generally small.

The ministers in this body appear to be Wm. Martin, J. Canterbury, A. Wallace, and W. Atkins.

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#### TYGART'S VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Was formed in 1838, of a few churches which withdrew from the Union and Broach Run communities, from disaffection towards their principles and measures as to benevolent operations. The churches are in the counties of Randolph, Barbour, Taylor, Harrison, Doddridge, and Ritchie. The whole amount of membership was 235 in 1845.(62)

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#### INDIAN CREEK ASSOCIATION.

All I know of such an institution was communicated in a letter from Rev. Eli Ball, Oct. 1843.

"A few weeks ago, there was a new Association formed in Monroe Co., in Western Virginia. It is called Indian Creek, and consists of three churches that formerly belonged to the New River Association. It has one ordained minister, elder Johnson Keaton, and is an anti-mission body."

I have had intimations of a Zoar Association in this State, and thought it was located in the gore of Virginia, which runs up between Pa. and the Ohio river; but Mr. Maddox assures me, he knows of no such body in that region; he thinks it must be east of the Blue Ridge, if there, is such an institution in the State.

#### Recapitulation of the Baptist affairs in North-Western Virginia.

Rev. Matthew Maddox, one of the pastors of the Broad Run Association, and J. Davidson, at that time clerk of the Union Association, have been my principal guide, in what I have said of these bodies, and most of the other smaller communities in this western region. They have taken much pains to supply me with historical materials. Rev. Mr. Wheeler, president of Rector College, of which the Associations here seem to have an especial care, has also shown much interest in my undertaking; these brethren, and a considerable number of the clerks here, mostly of the old Union, have given sketches of their respective churches, so that, would my limits permit, I could have detailed accounts of most all the churches in N. W. Virginia, in as particular a manner as Semple has done in his history of the Virginia baptists up to his time. Mr. Maddox has confirmed all the accounts I have given of Western Pa., and has shown that in early times the whole western territory in both States was one great missionary field, which was traversed by the same ministers, and that the Suttons, Corbley, and others were the planters of the early churches in

both; his remarks on the opposers of missionary efforts are somewhat severe; this is not strange when we consider how much the whole region is indebted to ministerial services of this kind, either by the appointments of the General Association, or by the self-supported efforts of the hardy and laborious ministers on the ground.

#### BAPTIST GENERAL ASSOCIATION.

This great confederacy, although under another name, is similar in its nature and operations to the State Conventions in other parts of the country; its full history cannot now be given; it is of great importance to the interests of the denomination in this great State, and must in time embody their united strength, which at present is by no means the case, even of those who profess to be friendly to its principles and designs.

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#### WESTERN ASSOCIATION.

This body is intended to combine the energies of the churches and Associations in missionary and other benevolent plans in the western regions of the state. The Minutes of 1816, being its third session, are before me, and exhibit a good degree of vigor and enterprise among the ultra montane brethren.

CLOSING REMARKS. The history of our denomination in this great territory, scanty and imperfect as it may appear, has cost me no small amount of labor. I have made the number of Associations greater than our statistical compilers have generally done, but they are all there, and with but few exceptions, the Minutes of them are before me. This is the first Suite they have come to where that portion of our denomination called old school, or anti-mission people, appear with any considerable force; and here they are but a feeble band, compared with those who profess to be the friends and supporters of evangelical efforts and moral reform.

This chapter on the Virginia baptists, with all my efforts at abridgment and compression, has swelled much beyond the limits I at first assigned to it, and yet it seems as it has but glanced at the history of our community in this ancient commonwealth. They are getting matters in a favorable train for future enterprises, which I should judge they had made up their minds to pursue with redoubled vigor and activity.

LITERARY INSTITUTIONS. As I have said relative to all the other States, all historical sketches of these interests must be reserved for my next volume: I will merely say, we have two seminaries under college charters, which are working their way into being as colleges de facto, as well as in name. Their names and locations have already been given.

Besides the great body of associated baptists, many of the other communities, who adopt essentially baptist view; as to gospel ordinances and religious freedom; exist here in great numbers. Those called Reformers, Disciples, Or Campbellites, probably outnumber all the rest. A summary account of all I can learn of them will be related under appropriate heads.

Correspondents. I may name Eli Ball, J. B. Taylor, David McGehee, C. T. Burley, L. W. Allen, J. R. Scott, Samuel Dorset, J. Henshall, H. Frazer, William Slaughter, R. Prior, Geo. Love, H. Keeling, in Eastern Virginia. Middle: L. B. Dulany, J. Remley, L. A. Alderson, J. N. Brown. Western: M. Maddox, J. Davidson, C. Wheeler, J. Bradley, A. Campbell. Also, the clerics of a number of the churches in the Union Association, as S. D. Norman, J. Martin, T. Pool, J. Hayhurst, P. Britton, T. Poulton, and Geo. Lake.

Some of these correspondents have taken no small pains to collect and supply the with historical materials.

In addition to these, Mr. Sands, publisher of the Religious Herald, Richmond, has been very punctual to publish my notices in my circulars, and spare me Minutes from his own files, which have afforded me material aid, and enabled me to be more minute in my details of all the Associations than I could otherwise have been.

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## Notes

59. Letter of Rev. M. Maddox, to the author, who quotes as his authority the oral testimony of William Powers, Esq., one of the first settlers of North-west Virginia, who is still alive.

60. In 1846, it reported 196; Union, \_\_\_\_\_, 180; Westfork, 107; Harmony, A. J. Garret, the same. All the others are under 100.

61. Letter of Rev. M. Maddox to the author.

62. Tygarts' Valley was, formerly, the name of a town in Randolph Co., which is now called Beverly -- Morse's Gazetteer.

[From David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, 1848; rpt. 1977, pp. 677-680. jrd]