

ABNER SMITH AND EARLY PRIMITIVE BAPTIST WORK IN TEXAS

Texas Baptists are in the vortex of a holy war over denominational identity. While the conflict is waged in associations, conventions, and the media, the real battle field is the local church, which is assaulted on every side by a plethora of entities asking for endorsement and financial support. Confusion reigns in the pews as members confront multiple associations, state and national conventions. The issue is not theology, but polity.

In the midst of conflicting claims as to who are the “true and loyal Baptists”, heritage is a logical beginning point for discussion. Who are Texas Baptists? What are the issues and circumstances which produces their special hybrid of Baptist theology? Answers to these kinds of questions provide an invaluable perspective for understanding the present controversy and how to react to it.

For most Texas Baptists, unfortunately, the story of Baptist beginnings ranks on a par with a root canal. Names such as Baylor, Morrell, Tryon, Huckins, and Cox may be familiar to some. Names such as Parker, Smith, Herrin, Green, and Reed, however, are an enigma. This is because these men were Primitive Baptists and were outside the mainstream of Texas Baptist heritage.

At the turn of the nineteenth century a great missionary movement began in England with William Carey as its catalyst. The furor of world missions captured American Christians, especially Baptists through Adoniram and Anne Judson and

Luther Rice. Local missionary societies appeared among Baptist churches to collect funds to support missionaries. The movement grew until in 1812 a national body, the Baptist General Missionary Convention also sometimes known as the Triennial Convention, was formed to coordinate missionary efforts.

But for every action there is a reaction: claiming apostolic origin, the “Old School”, “Hardshell”, or Primitive Baptist movement was a nineteenth century protest against the missionary movement. They opposed “money based” missions, benevolent societies, and the assessing of churches to support missions, missionaries, and Sunday school.¹ They asserted that “there were no missionary societies in the days of the apostles and none directed by Scripture: therefore there should be none now.”²

The first Primitive Baptist church in the United States was the Welch Tract Baptist Church, founded in South Wales and immigrated to Newark, Delaware in 1701.³ The most significant of the early Primitive Baptist churches was the Hopewell Church in Mercer County, New Jersey.⁴ From its early beginnings in New England the movement spread to South by John Taylor, who moved to Tennessee in 1781, where he founded many churches and planted the seeds of anti-missionary theology. From Tennessee the movement spread to other Southern states and reached its zenith during the colonization of Texas. As the early Texas settlers came mostly from Southern states, the anti-missionary spirit came with them.

The seminary graduate, who remained awake during their Baptist history class, might remember that Daniel Parker, a Primitive Baptist, brought the first Baptist church to Texas in 1833. The Pilgrim Predestinarian Regular Baptist Church was organized in Lamotte, Illinois, and, with seven members, immigrated to San Felipe de Austin. Parker was the father of “Two Seeds in the Spirit” theology. After eighteen months Parker moved to Elkhart, Texas, where he founded nine

churches – Hopewell in Shelby Count (1837), New Bethel in Sabine County (1838), Fort Houston in Houston County (1840), Mt. Pleasant in Montgomery County (1841), Mustang Prairie (1841 or 1842), Wolfe Creek (1845), and perhaps others.⁵ Parker also led in the organization of several associations. J.M. Carroll was deeply impressed by this anti-missionary missionary and wrote: “No other preacher has ever lived in East Texas who left a deeper or more indelible impress on the theology of that section than was made by Daniel Parker.”⁶ In 1986 the Pilgrim Church as still active and was the oldest Primitive Baptist Church in Texas.⁷

Although perhaps not as impressive as Parker, another Primitive Baptist who left deep footprints in Texas Baptist history was Abner Smith, founder of the first Baptist church organized on Texas soil.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: first, to introduce most people to Abner Smith and the place of the Primitive Baptists in early Texas history; and, secondly, to illustrate that missionary-minded Baptists in Texas have labored, even from the very beginning, amidst strong adversity.

I was introduced to Abner Smith through the genealogical works of M. R. Kruemcke, Jr., a direct descendant of Smith. In his studies, Kruemcke listed twenty-six churches Smith influenced, and stated that he was involved in a total of forty churches in Texas. These churches were in Bastrop, Bell, Fayette, Williamson, Caldwell, Washington, Lavaca, Milam, Guadalupe, Coryell and Burleson Counties. Unfortunately, he listed no documentation as to his sources. Some of the material appeared in a paper I read in Austin in 1998 on Texas Baptists’ first controversy (over missions). Since there was much unused data, I felt it merited another paper – this one about the man himself. In search of primary source materials I found few available, so I broadened the scope of the paper to include some early beginnings of the Primitive Baptist work in Texas.

Abner Smith was a man who allowed no neutral opinions of

himself. One either admired or detested him. From a missionary perspective, B.F. Fuller wrote that Smith “occupies in Texas Baptist history a doubtful and uncertain position.”⁸ Similarly, B. F. Riley said, “Smith and his flock made no impression on the life of the growing population of the new country, and after a few years the organization became extinct.”⁹ On the other hand, Primitive Baptist historian R. H. Pittman, affirmed, “he was strong in the faith of God’s salvation in Jesus and all the seeds of promise and stood firm for Bible doctrine and practice...”¹⁰ Perhaps a more balanced and fairer evaluation of the man came from one who knew him personally — R.E.B. Baylor. In a letter to J.H. Stribling in 1871, he remembered Smith:

He was a man deeply read in Scriptures, a man of talent and unquestionable piety, a high toned Calvinist and anti everything except the Bible and the church of the blessed Savior. If you did not agree with him on the platform he had no fellowship with you. Although a good man he had I think strong feelings, a narrow mind, and unnecessary prejudices.”¹¹

Abner Smith was born on July 4, 1781 in Warren County, North Carolina, the third of nine children of George and Elizabeth Smith. Little is known of his early life. In 1805 he married Siddy Busbee in Wake County, North Carolina, and they had six children — Nathan, Bethel, Hamilton, Mary, Nancy, and Kaya.¹² After Siddy’s death he married Sarah Jackson in Nashville, Tennessee, and had one child, Abigail, in Lawrence County, Alabama.¹³

Abner and his brother, Solomon, also a Primitive preacher, were in some way connected with the Town Creek Baptist Church which was constituted in 1803 in Nash County, North Carolina. Kruemcke cites documentation from the University of North Carolina’s history department that out of the Town Creek Church came the beginnings of the Church of Christ.¹⁴

In 1806-1807 Smith moved to Tennessee. In 1818 Abner and Solomon moved to Alabama where they founded four

churches in Lawrence, Franklin, and Marion Counties. The first church organized by Smith was the Town Creek Baptist Church, which Kruemcke affirmed was still active in 1971. Abner’s brother-in-law, T.W. Cox, was pastor of a church east of Town Creek. Though both shared a common background and theology, in later years they became fierce adversaries. During this period, Smith served as moderator of the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association in 1832-1833.

In 1823 Smith journeyed from Tennessee to Texas and voted in the “Alcalades” election on February 13, 1824 in Nacogdoches.¹⁵ This initial exposure to Texas sparked the pioneer spirit of Smith, and although it would be nine years before his return, he never forgot his first impressions of Texas.

Accompanied by members of the Town Creek Church and some from the Marion County church, Smith left the Buttahatchie River and came to Texas in 1833. The group settled near the present town of Bastrop, where he was given a Spanish Land Grant in what is now Burleson County.¹⁶ The records of Bell County indicate he filed on land October 28, 1834.

The Mexican government prohibited the establishment of any church in Texas other than Roman Catholic. On March 26, 1834, however, a decree was passed that stated no person should be molested on account of his religious or political opinions, provided he did not disturb the public order.¹⁷ Three days later Smith founded the first Baptist church organized on Texas soil – the Providence Baptist Church. Organized on March 29, 1834, twelve miles south of Bastrop on the Colorado River, the church’s six charter members were constituted by a presbytery of Abner Smith and Isaac Crouch.¹⁸ In time, a small church building was erected on the eastern banks of Alum Creek, near its mouth. Providence was the first Baptist church organized in Texas, the first church in Bastrop County, and the first in the county to have its own building.¹⁹ Some historians contend that it was a transplanted church,

constituted in Alabama and immigrated to Texas. Carroll wrote that thirty-two members from his Alabama church came to Texas with Smith.²⁰ Apparently this was the number of the entire entourage. Thankfully, J.S. Newman, a Primitive Baptist historian, corrected the matter by citing the records of the Providence Church:

State of Coahuila and Texas, Municipality of Mena, Colorado. March 29, 1834. A preamble to the Constitution of a Baptist church. Whereas, there being a few Baptist brethren of the Baptist order having emigrated from the United States and settled in Texas, viz: James Burleson, Joseph Burleson, and Elizabeth, his wife; Moses Gage, Isabella Crouch and Elizabeth Burleson, having brought letters of dismissal with them and anxious to enjoy the church privileges, they appointed to meet on the fifth Saturday in March at John Burleson's in order to consult the minds of each other for framing a constitution, and on the day set they met with Brethren Isaac Crouch and Abner Smith, ministers of the Gospel, and others, and a number of spectators. A. Smith, being requested, preached the introductory sermon from the text, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The brethren, after counselling [sic] together, called Brethren Crouch and Smith as a presbytery to constitute them and on producing letters, and after being examined on the Article of Faith, the said Crouch and Smith pronounced the six members above named the Church of Christ, known by the name of Providence.²¹

Crouch joined the church soon after its constitution and the following November Smith also joined by letter.²² Crouch soon renounced the anti-missionary stance of Smith and most of the church members and returned to Nashville where he upheld "a sound Baptist faith." Z.N. Morrell, who knew Crouch well, said that "his work was cut short by an Indian raid, in which he as killed about a mile and a half from the present locality of the Little River Baptist Church, in Milam County."²³

The story and ministry of the Providence Church are veiled in obscurity as the minutes of the church were unavailable to this writer. One must be careful to distinguish between the Providence Church at Bastrop (anti-missionary) from the

Providence Church at Chappell Hill in Washington Country (missionary). From time to time there are singular references to the Bastrop church which provide glimpses of its pilgrimage. In 1838, after the failure of the Washington church and the unsettled conditions of the area, Morrell moved to La Grange. Soon afterwards he visited "the little organization at old Brother John Burleson's home, twelve miles above Plum Creek."²⁴ This was the Providence Church. While camping on a site near the present town of Plum, Morrell was asked to preach in the home of William Scallorn.²⁵ At that meeting Mrs. Asiel Dancer made a profession of faith. According to Morrell, Smith was "paralyzed and helpless at that time,"²⁶ so he asked Morrell to baptize Mrs. Dancer.²⁷ This was Morrell's first baptism in Texas, and perhaps the first baptism west of the Trinity River. Providence was asked to assist in the formation of the Hopewell or Plum Grove Baptist Church in 1839. Providence granted Smith a letter of dismissal in November 1840. At the same meeting R. G. Green, a prominent Primitive Baptist of the time (participated in the founding of the Old North Church near Nacogdoches), who joined the church in December 1838, was excluded for drunkenness. Newman wrote he had no record of the church after 1841. Providence, however, was one of the founding churches of the Providence Baptist Association in 1850. In 1878 the Providence Association granted letters of dismissal to Providence, Beulah, and Antioch churches to found the Friendship Association. As of 1884 Providence remained a cooperating member of that Association. Newman, in 1906, wrote the church dissolved "a few years ago."²⁸

In 1836 Smith moved to Burleson County (which was then Washington County) where he received a land grant of one league (4439 acres).²⁹ He distributed the land among his family. Sometime during this period he received 177 acres of land near Georgetown in Williamson County. Smith availed himself of as much land in Texas as possible.

The preaching of Morrell during 1838 in the Plum Grove Community resulted in the desire to establish a church. A

delegation of Asa Wright, Stephen and William Scallorn (brothers), were appointed by the Plum Grove Community in March 1839 to visit the Providence Church to seek help in organizing a church. R. G. Green and Asiel Dancer, from the Providence church, formed a presbytery and organized the Hopewell or Plum Grove Baptist Church in April 1839. Known by both names, the church met in the Plum Grove community, the first church in Fayette County. The exact date of the founding of the church was a matter of discussion between Robert A. Baker and D. D. Tidwell.³⁰ This was obviously a mixed congregation of both missionary and anti-missionary members as was true of most early Texas Baptist churches. Because Baptists were few in number and widely scattered, differences were tolerated. Newman called Providence a Primitive church while Morrell termed it “our little church.” Apparently Primitives referred to it as “Hopewell” and the missionary Baptists as “Plum Grove.” In the July 1839 conference the church proposed to discuss two actions: 1) to take into consideration the time for feet-washing: and, 2) to prohibit the question of missions ever being discussed in church conference, and declared non-fellowship for the same.³¹ Their approval demonstrated the growing tension between the missionary and anti-missionary factions in the church. Soon after its constitution the church affiliated with the United Baptists of western Tennessee.³²

In 1840, mostly through the influence of William Scallorn, who was missionary in spirit, the issue of missions was brought to a vote. Of the twenty-two members, thirteen were missionary and nine were anti-missionary. The minority exerted such a strong influence that they controlled the use of the church building and the record books for almost a year. For some reason the missionary-minded majority did not withdraw but allowed the church to call Abner Smith and Asiel Dancer as pastors, both strong anti-missionary advocates.

The rule of the minority was short-lived. At a conference on October 25, 1841, charges were brought against nine members

of Hopewell because of their anti-missionary sentiments and their support of T.W. Cox and his “Campbellite” tendencies. Seven of the nine members were excluded, with another excluded later. At this conference, a significant resolution was adopted:

On motion resolved by the church, and whereas Elder A. Smith has been instrumental, in our beliefs of the above named difficulty, and has been assigned the grounds that he is not a United Baptist; and moreover, and represented that the grounds on which the United Baptists are founded is only nominal. Therefore, we feel bound to pronounce out of the order of United Baptists and cannot recognize him as a preacher of our faith and order.³³

The eight withdrew and later organized a new church. Stephen Scallorn, a local physician, took the church records with him. Newman wrote:

In November 1842, the church was dissolved by Elder Dancer and Deacon Stephen Scallorn. Soon after this a portion of the nine members that were in the dissolution of the Hopewell Church met at La Grange, Fayette County, and organized a church, calling it ‘Friendship.’³⁴

The missionary element, on June 11, 1842 assumed the name “Plum Grove Baptist church,” called Morrell as pastor, named William Scallorn as clerk,³⁵ and affiliated with Union Baptist Association.³⁶

It seems there were several Baptist churches in the La Grange area, some missionary and some Primitive. On March 25, 1840 James Huckins assisted T. W. Cox in forming a missionary church at Ruttersville, a growing Methodist community five miles from La Grange.³⁷ Baker contended it was the missionary element of the “mixed” La Grange Church.³⁸

The crisis over missions at the Plum Grove Church also spread to other churches. Cox grew increasingly bold in his affirmations of Campbell’s views and led the churches he served away from their roots. The authorization by Cox for a

lay member to baptize a convert brought the issue to a head at Independence. Baylor, who shared the pulpit with Cox, heard of the accusation of fraud against Cox before he left Talladega, Alabama, where both belonged to the same church. When confronted by Baylor over the accusation, Cox was unmoved. Correspondence from Alabama, however, confirmed Cox was dismissed from the church because of fraud. Through the intervention of William Tryon, James Huckins, and Z. N. Morrell the missionary faction prevailed and Cox was excluded from Independence Church by a single vote. Similar action was taken at La Grange. The Travis Church maintained a majority of members who supported Cox, but withdrew and founded a church nearby on Kentucky Ridge.³⁹ Soon afterwards Cox left the ministry. On January 20, 1842, Cox became justice of the peace of Fayette County, but soon thereafter was elected second lieutenant in William E. Eastland's Company B of Brig. Gen. Alexander Somervell's Army of the South West. Cox participated in the Somervell and Mier expeditions, was captured in the battle of Mier, and took part in the escape attempt led by Ewen Cameron at Salado on February 11, 1843. He was the only one of four of Cameron's men to make his way back to Texas.⁴⁰ In later life, according to Link, Cox devoted his time to horse racing and gambling.⁴¹

During this time there was a strong movement of the Baptist churches of the area to unite and create an association. In June 1840 twenty-five men met at the Independence Church to discuss the creation of a Baptist association in the area. This was the largest assembly of Baptists in Texas to date. Of the assembly, four were preachers. The missionary Baptists were represented by R. E. B. Baylor and T. W. Cox: the anti-missionary Baptists by Abner Smith and Asiel Dancer. Z. N. Morrell, who moved in September to the Guadalupe, two miles out of Gonzalas, was pastor of the Plum Grove Church, and planned to attend this meeting, but illness prevented him.⁴² Out of courtesy because of his tenure and age, Baylor nominated Smith as moderator. This action angered Cox, who felt he

should be chosen. During three or four days of deliberations, the men sought a compromise. The adoption of Articles of Faith proved devastating to the proceedings. The debate centered around Smith and Cox. In his letter to Stribling in 1871, Baylor remembered the meeting:

...though the prayers and tears of myself and others, the stern old Calvinist brother Smith softened down a little and drew up a platform of principles on which we all assented except Elder Cox. He made a warm and exciting speech against them, declaring the old fellow once had a rope around his neck and would he never again consent to be thus tied.⁴³

On that note the meeting adjourned. On October 8, 1840, fifteen representatives from the Independence, La Grange, and Travis churches met at Travis and formed the Union Baptist Association.⁴⁴ Cox, pastor of all three churches at the time, was elected moderator and they adopted Articles of Faith of a modified Calvinistic stance.

Little material that can be documented is known of Smith until 1849, when he participated in the formation of the Providence Baptist Association. The Union of Predestinarian Baptists of the Regular Faith and Order, organized in 1844,⁴⁵ met at the Mt. Beula Church in Angelina County, Texas, on Saturday, October 18, 1849. At this gathering Abner Smith, a messenger from the Friendship Church, was appointed moderator. The main item of business was the subject of division of the Association. The messengers agreed to:

...grant letters to Friendship, Providence, Plum Creek, and San Jacinto Churches to meet in convention at the Providence Church in Bastrop County, ten miles below Bastrop on the Colorado River, on Friday before the first Sunday in June next, to form and organize themselves into an association upon the same faith and constitution of this Association: and Brethren J. W. Parker, E. A. Bowen, R. T. Gibson, and Brethren G. Parks and Eli Russell attend the same; and that the clerk write and forward said letter."⁴⁶

The organizational meeting was at the Providence Church, Bastrop County, on May 31, 1850. Messengers from the Providence, Friendship, and Plum Creek Churches attended, with the San Jacinto Church conspicuously absent. The first action of the gathering was to approve the constitution and Articles of Faith. Smith acted as moderator of the meeting.

The first meeting of the new association began on September 7, 1850 at Plum Creek. Providence was the fifth Primitive Baptist association organized in Texas. Messengers from the original three churches gathered and the Mulberry Fork and Little Flock Churches were received into fellowship. The site of the original Little Flock Church is now located in the center of Fort Hood near Killeen, Texas. Being duly constituted the Association elected Smith moderator. With the exception of one year he served as moderator until 1860. In 1858 William, Abner's grandson, served as moderator.

The Mulberry Fork church is an interesting story. It was constituted on Saturday before the third Sunday in July 1850, on the Mulberry Fork of the Navidad River, Fayette County, Texas, in the home of Stephen Scallorn, approximately two miles south of Schulenburg. One of the charter members, Calvin Gage, married Mary Smith, Abner's daughter. Abner Smith was chosen to "the Pastoral care of the church."⁴⁷

In 1854 two conflicting letters came to the Association from the Zion Church, but the Association refused to hear them until they were discussed by the church. When the Association met at Zion in Williamson County September 23-25, 1855, one letter was accepted and the other rejected. The doctrinal issue was eternal devil, eternal union, eternal children, and eternal justification, which the Association deemed heresy, being of the two-seed tradition.⁴⁸ This action illustrated the division among the Primitive Baptists. In 1856 the rejected party, which consisted of messengers from the Plum Creek, Mt. Olive, and part of Zion churches, withdrew to a local church and organized the Providence Association of Baptists of the Regular Faith and Order.⁴⁹

In 1858 the Association met at Buckner's Creek Church near Rosanky, sometimes called Hallmark Prairie.⁵⁰ Four churches petitioned the Association for letters to form a new association. The petition was granted and Little Flock, New Hope, Zion, Concord, along with Sugar Loaf and Rainey's Creek Churches met with Concord Church in Williamson County, on Saturday before the fourth Sunday in October, and organized the Concord Association.⁵¹

Smith was a messenger from the Friendship Church from 1850 to 1857. In the 1858 minutes he is listed as a messenger from the Buckner's Creek Church, where he served until 1860. The minutes of Providence Association for 1861 read "the moderator being absent, Elder George Daniel was appointed to fill his place until the Association organized."⁵² Smith disappears from the minutes of the association and from any records available to the writer. He was, at the time, nearing eighty years of age.

The exact date of Smith's death is a matter of dispute as is his burial place.⁵³ Kruemcke quotes from the Williamson County Land Office, "Mr. Smith died April 26, 1872."⁵⁴ Donna Chapman states he died in 1876 in Burleson County.⁵⁵ Whatever the date, Smith lived a long and full life. He left indelible imprints on all of Baptists his day, especially in Central Texas. Smith influenced Central Texas in much the same manner as Parker did East Texas. His legacy was carried on by two of his grandsons (by his son Newman), William and C. C. Smith. C. C. Smith was J. M. Carroll's first pastor after becoming a Christian.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, there is little biographical material on Smith which would provide insights into his personality, character, family relations, personal theology, and the usual stories about men of history. For the present, the testimony of others as to his actions and their impression must suffice.

During the formative years of Texas Baptists the Primitive movement was a formidable adversary for missionary Baptists. For decades they co-existed in a growing land. In time the

missionary Baptists became dominant and the anti-missionary movement passed into obscurity. The anti-missionary protest, in Lambert's words, "would be reduced to a terrible Baptist grudge."⁵⁷ The wall they build around themselves to keep the world out became their prison.⁵⁸ In 1958 Primitive Baptists reported 300 associations, 3000 churches with a total membership of 100,000 in the United States.⁵⁹ If our forefathers had not fought the good fight, the missionary spirit, characteristic of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, would have been compromised, if not extinguished.

This excursion into the past hopefully will encourage Texas Baptists today. We need to remember that dissenting voices have been a part of our history, and remain so today. We also need to remember that compromise leads to division if principles are maintained. May differences not prevent us from being good stewards of the heritage bequeathed to this generation.

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NOTES

¹W. J. Berry, s.v. "Primitive Baptists," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, vol. 2 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 1114.

²Frank S. Mead and Samuel S. Hill, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 9th ed (Nashville: Abington, 1995), 72.

³W. S. Craig, *Scrap History of Primitive Baptist History* (St. Joseph: Messenger of Peace, 1923), 289.

⁴Ibid.

⁵J.M. Carroll, *The History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing Co., 1923 reprint ed. Historical Publishing Society, 1977), 116.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Samuel B. Hesler, s. v. "Daniel Parker" at The Handbook of Texas Online, accessed July 15, 2002, www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online.

⁸B.F. Fuller, *History of Texas Baptists* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1900), 78.

⁹B. F. Riley, *History of Baptists in Texas* (Dallas: Author, 1907), 17.

¹⁰R. H. Pittman, *Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers in the United States* (Indianapolis: Herald Publishing Co., 1900), 250.

¹¹Robert A. Baker, *The Blossoming Desert* (Waco: Word, 1970), 50.

¹²M. R. Kruemcke, Jr., *Descendants of Abner Smith and Alexander Carter* (Author, 1971), 4.

¹³Donna Chapman, "Abner Smith" at Lone Star Genealogy, accessed September 12, 2002, www.lonestargenealogy.com/bound.bounds.html. Kruemcke spelled her name "Abergail". He also stated Abner's second wife was named Rebecca and the marriage occurred in Texas.

¹⁴Kruemcke, 4.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Chapman.

¹⁷Bill Moore, *Bastrop County 1691-1900*, rev. ed. (Wichita Falls: Nortex Press, 1977), 99. Quotes from H. P. N. Gammel, *The Laws of Texas: 1822-1897*, vol. 1 (Austin: Gammel Books, 1898), 358.

¹⁸William Stuart Red, *The Texas Colonists and Religion 1821-1836* (Austin: E. L. Shettles, n. d.), 81.

¹⁹Kenneth Kesselus, *History of Bastrop County, Texas before Statehood* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Co., 1986), 99.

²⁰Carroll, 73.

²¹J. S. Newman, *A History of Primitive Baptists of Texas, Oklahoma, and Indian Territories*, vol. 1 (Tioga: Baptist Trumpet, 1906), 37-38.

²²Ibid.

²³Z. N. Morrell, *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness*, third ed. revised (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Co., 1993), 32. Balcro.Com, a genealogical web page for the Ballard and Crouch families, cites his death June 1, 1836 in Texas, not Tennessee.

²⁴Ibid., 55.

²⁵T. H. Johnson, *History of the Plum Grove Baptist Church* (Author, 1977), 6.

²⁶There are no explanations for the paralysis. It might have been a stroke. Its duration is unknown.

²⁷Morrell, 55.

²⁸Newman, 39.

²⁹Kruemcke, 5.

³⁰For a full discussion of the origin of this church see Baker, 33-52.

³¹Carroll, 126. Quotes Newman, 39.

³²The Handbook of Texas Online “Asiel Dancer” by Betty McCarty McAnelly. 30 July 2002. www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online.

³³Carroll, 128.

³⁴Ibid, 127.

³⁵J. M. Dawson, “Missions and Missionaries” in *Centennial History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas: Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1936), 33.

³⁶*Minutes of the Union Baptist Association*, 1842, 3.

³⁷Eugene W. Baker, *Nothing Better Than This: The Biography of James Huckins* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 1985), 26. Baker quotes Carroll from a letter by Baylor to the *Christian Index*, in which Baylor used the name “Huntersville” rather than Rutersville.

³⁸Robert Baker, 50.

³⁹J. B. Link, *Texas Historical and Biographical Magazine*, 4 vols. (Austin: 1891; reprint ed. Baptist Standard Bearer: Paris, n. d.), 1:38.

⁴⁰Thomas W. Curter, s.v. “Thomas Washington Cox” The Handbook of Texas Online, accessed on June 23, 2002, www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online.

⁴¹Link, I:50.

⁴²Morrell, 67.

⁴³Robert Baker, 70. Letter dated April 13, 1871 from Holly Oak. Original in Library, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

⁴⁴*Minutes of Union Baptist Association, 1840*, 3.

⁴⁵J. M. Carroll, *Texas Baptist Statistics 1895*, Centennial Edition Reprint. (Dallas: Baptist General Convention of Texas, 1985), 5. In his *History* Carroll gave the date of 1840, 117.

⁴⁶Kruemcke, *Minutes of the Providence Association of the Baptist of the Regular Faith and Order 1850-1897* (Author, 1990), 4.

⁴⁷Kruemcke, *The Record Book of Mulberry Church in Fayette Co., TX July 1850-1885* (Author, 1990), 1.

⁴⁸Newman, 14.

⁴⁹Newman, *Minutes of Providence Baptist Association*, (1905). Writing of Primitive Baptists Online., 4.

⁵⁰Letter from Barbara Vana, Museum Administrator of Bastrop County Historical Society, October 4, 2002.

⁵¹Newman, *History*, 15.

⁵²Kruemcke, *Minutes of Providence Association*, 67.

⁵³Wayne Kruemcke (son of M. R. Kruemcke, Jr.) stated in an email to the writer on September 18, 2002 that Abner Smith was buried with his son, Newman, NNE of Bastrop at Blackjack.

⁵⁴Kruemcke, *Descendants of Abner Smith*, 6.

⁵⁵No notation as to source provided.

⁵⁶Carroll, *History*, 73. Carroll said he was Abner’s son, while Kruemcke called him a grandson.

⁵⁷Byron Cecil Lambert, *The Rise of the Antimissionary Baptists: Sources and Leaders 1800-1840* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 413.

⁵⁸Ibid., 405.

⁵⁹Berry, 1115.