

SLICER ST. CHURCH OF CHRIST:

A HISTORY

100 YEARS OF



Reaching for Fullness

1911-2011

DEDICATION

April 2011

This record has been compiled in honor of all Slicer Street Church of Christ members—past, present, and future. It has been a joy working in the community of Kennett and with the great members of Slicer Street. I am indebted to the labors of those before me, some of whom I now know. I am honored to labor among the current members, all of whom sharpen me in different ways. And I am humbled at the thought of those who will follow after, whom I can serve in some small but important way. May God bless this great church!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It has taken years to compile the information contained in this book. It is intended to be a work of reference for those with interest in church history or Kennett history. Hours were spent making copies from microfilm and typing out information and reading every bulletin printed by the Slicer Street church. More were spent securing pictures to illustrate people and events. The internet was a great resource for this, but so were the many people contacted. Nearly all of them were very willing to help locate and provide pictures for this history. But a few specific thanks are in order.

To the Dunklin County Library, providing me access to the microfilm copies of the Dunklin Democrat. The staff of this library is second to none. Special thanks to Tony Byrd and the late Barbara Webb for their expertise and endless knowledge of the community.

To those who helped in locating pictures and information. There is no way to list them all, but I will try.

Abbe McCarroll, with an insatiable appetite for research, despite time constraints of being a full time college student;

Carrel Folkes, who has lived much of this history and has some of it in film;

Lisa Girtman, who happens to be related to some former preachers;

Mike McDaniel, whose love for church history compelled him to work as hard at finding pictures as I did;

The Southwest Church of Christ staff, who did not delay in providing several pictures of their staff from the past;

The Freed Hardeman Archives office, who were willing to scan pictures from past yearbooks—an incredible service they provided with grace;

Wilma Spacht, who provided the A. H. Lammon pictures once Mike McDaniel provided the clue—that was a treasure!;

Lona Mae James, she lived it and she remembers it, what more can you say?;

Joe Ford, Jr., who provided one amazing old picture of a young man;

Jerry Jacques, sending pictures of a significant Kennett figure to make the story more real;

Polly See and her daughter Angela Burns, who were willing to help me actually *see* Bill See and know him a little,

Martha Highfill, who was so prompt in providing a photo of her father;

Frank Reddick, who has a voracious appetite for genealogy and history so that he just can't help himself in helping others find stuff, in this case about Cephas Awtrey;

Inez Mosley, who obviously is proud of her heritage—as she should be!;

Freddie Sokolov, graciously letting me scan a photo of her father—I had heard of Fred Killebrew nearly all my life, but now I have seen him!;

And all those who willingly provided photos and tips that led to photos and info. I can't name you all, but I definitely owe you all.

The internet was an amazing source. The following sites were helpful.

The Loden Daniel Library at Freed Hardeman, particularly under the Archives section.

The Harding University Library—in particular all the Petit Jean yearbooks they have online.

The Encyclopedia of Religious Debates: what a resource! It lists debaters and topics and often has pictures. A rich place!

The Center for Restoration Studies at Abilene Christian University. The staff is amazingly helpful and there is treasure to be found here! They were my heroes with Norvell Brickell!

The Restoration Movement.com. What a wonderful compilation of history and photographs. A visit is humbling.

There were also published resources that helped a great deal.

Baxter, Batsell Barrett and M. Norvel Young. *Preachers of Today*. 5 Volumes between 1952 and 1982. Published by The Christian Press and Gospel Advocate.

Laird, Joe W. *Oft Asked Questions*. Wichita Falls, TX: Western Christian Foundation, n.d. This contains a picture of and a sermon by James Edgar Laird.

Morgan, Boyd. *Arkansas Angels*. Fourth Printing. Paragould: College Bookstore and Press, 1995.

Robinson, Edward J. *Show Us How You Do It*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008.

Smith, Loyd L. *Gospel Preachers of Yesteryear*. Allen, TX: Loyd Smith, 1986.

Wilson, Michael J. *Arkansas Christians: A History of the Restoration Movement in Randolph County, Arkansas, 1800 to 1995*. Delight, AR: Gospel Light, 1997.

Wilson, Michael. *A History of the Churches of Christ in Little Rock, 1900-1925*. Memphis: Michael Wilson, 1980.

Finally, a word to the reader. There are always choices made about what to include and what not to include. It is always an exercise of editorial in making such decisions. Anything left out that should be included is definitely my fault.

What allowed this story to be written was a beautiful partnership between the candid information found in the *Dunklin Democrat* archives and the wonderful treasure trove of church records. They served to supplement one another. You will be able to tell which one provides the information you read, in case you want to check it out for yourself. To make it easy, the church library has a copy of all pages of church information used in this record, which I can promise is exhaustive of all that appears in the paper. If you don't believe me, go ahead and check it out. But be sure you have plenty of time!

But I am particularly sensitive about chapter 5. I know that some will feel slighted because of a feeling of blame placed upon individuals involved in the division that occurred in the late 1950s. I mean no personal slight against anyone. I tried to be as objective as possible. That is why there were no interviews with living persons regarding this period of time. I went solely with written records. But I will be forthright: I understand and respect the issues involved, but I do not hold to the strictness of the "non-cooperative" position in the debate. This colors my view, I know. I am aware of the issue, having grown up in Ketcherside territory and having friends of that persuasion. I marvel at their high view of Scripture and I respect their conclusion. I just don't understand why unity is impossible because of it. I ask for your patience and understanding as to where I am coming from. And if it just isn't something you can appreciate, knowing this is descriptive and not prescriptive in nature, just skip over that chapter. It was not enjoyable to research or write, I assure you.

This work is not the first of its kind, nor is it the only. Before this effort, C. W. Brannam did a short history and Martel Pace did a longer one. Each of these efforts include some personal insights and experiences that

were unique to them. I have chosen to honor the integrity of those efforts by letting them stand on their own. They could easily be included in an appendix, but I have chosen to make them available for anyone's review in the church history bookshelf in the church library.

One final issue: a wish list. I would have included many more pictures if I could have located it. I literally dream about finding more on George Toland. He is a complete mystery to me. If you know of anything, please contact me. I would like another picture of Norvell Brickell. And pictures of Cephas Awtrey, Charles F. Hardin, and another of M. S. Mason would definitely be welcomed.

Go ahead now and jump into the story. I hope you find the narrative interesting. I can't imagine anyone would want to read it unless there is some level of personal involvement in the story. But if there is, I certainly hope this brings back memories or causes you to see for the first time the who and the what behind the history of this one congregation that has witnessed to the truth for a century in the Bootheel.

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