



CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY

Gallatin Church of Christ

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The *Millennial Harbinger* and Gallatin

To this point, I have largely shared evidences of Restoration-Movement activity in Gallatin and Sumner County in the early- to mid-1800s. The Restoration Movement eventuated in the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. Alexander Campbell is the most widely known leader of the movement—and is the source of the label “Campbellite.” In 1830, Campbell began publishing *The Millennial Harbinger* to provide communication for his movement. On the pages of the *Harbinger*, I found a few references to Gallatin and/or Sumner County.

In January **1837**, we find a “**J. M. Anderson**, Gallatin” listed as an agent for the paper.¹

In February **1839**, we find a December 1838 letter by “**Charles Cassedy**” from “Cragfont, Tennessee,” on the topic of “popular national education.”² Cassedy shows at least some acquaintance with Campbell’s efforts to restore primitive Christianity. Cassedy’s letter also mentions a correspondence between himself and General William Trousdale, which correspondence he wishes to get published in the *Harbinger*.

In March **1839**, we find a November 1838 letter by “**Charles Cassedy**” from “Cragfont” to (General) **William Trousdale**, then-editor of the Gallatin *Union*. Trousdale submitted Cassedy’s letter to Campbell for publication in the *Harbinger*. The topic is popular education of children, and Cassedy advertises a language textbook he has written.³

In October **1842**, Campbell’s paper reports the evangelism of R. C. Rice, G. W. Elley, and J. T. Johnson at “Fountain Head, Gallatin, and Hopewell in Tennessee,” among their many stops, mostly in Kentucky.⁴ (The same report was found in Barton Stone’s paper, *The Christian Messenger*.)

The same *Harbinger* issue reports **41 additions** made to the “congregations of Disciples” “near Gallatin, Tennessee, at Hopewell.”⁵

In July **1843**, we find a report from G. W. Elly⁶ on a controversy in Tennessee between Methodists and “Campbellites” on baptism. Elly reports that the Methodist Elder “F. E. Pitts” “can no longer do much injury in Sumner county.”⁷

¹ “Agents,” in Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger* New Series Volume 1: Issue 1 (January 1837 [Bethany, VA]): p. 49.

² “Education,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* New Series 3:2 (February 1839): pp. 87-92.

³ “Education,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* New Series 3:3 (March 1839): pp. 120-24.

⁴ “News from the Churches,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* New Series 6:10 (October 1842): pp. 478-79.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 479. This Restoration Movement eventuated in the Christian Churches, the Churches of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ. Hence, the language of “congregations of Disciples” in 1842. Hopewell was one of two locations at which the Sylvan church (est. 1834) met—the predecessor to the Old Union Church of Christ.

⁶ The same evangelist spelled “Elley” above. We see both spellings in the *Harbinger* and *Christian Messenger*.

In June **1844**, G. W. Elley reports receiving a letter “from the brethren in Sumner county, Tennessee, near Gallatin, urging *again* the necessity for a review of Pitts’ pamphlet,” a written attack on Campbell’s teachings on baptism.⁸

In March **1845**, the same controversy is the theme of Elley’s report, in which he mentions a public confrontation and refutation held in Gallatin in 1842 (excerpted above).⁹

of Alabama, Mississippi, &c. and by thousands regarded as not only true, but a text-book against the teaching of the brethren. That book I noticed and exposed in his presence, and also before a very large audience in Gallatin. Ten . in November. 1842. I hazard nothing in affirming that, to the satisfaction of every honest mind present, it was demonstrably proved, and that too from the very documents to which he appealed, that his charges so boldly and recklessly made against A. Campbell and the disciples were most shamefully untrue. But notwithstanding all this he found his party, as many of them then

In April **1847**, a “**P. Hubbard**, Gallatin, Sumner co.” is named as an agent for subscribers to consult for scholarships to Bethany College.¹⁰

Dr. W. Webster, Morning Sun, Shenandoah Co. Va.
P. Hubbard, Gallatin, Sumner co.
George Stroud, Hickory Creek, W. Va.

In May **1851**, we find Tolbert Fanning’s report, from Franklin College, of the passing of “**Peter Hubbard**,” who was “mainly instrumental in planting” the Sylvan church—the predecessor to Old Union Church of Christ.¹¹

In January **1859**, we read an enquiry from “**Joseph A. Hubbard**” from Gallatin to Brother Milligan regarding “the temporary reality of departed spirits.”¹²

In March **1864**, we read of a Church of Christ in Louisville, Kentucky, purchasing a “house of worship” from Cumberland Presbyterians.¹³

Summary

I did not report every reference to Gallatin I found—for example, the account of a controversy involving Mormons in 1842. Hopefully, the above references suffice to show the connections of some people in Gallatin in the mid-1800s to Campbell’s publication and movement. We learned of the dispute with Methodists in the 1840s on the part of some who associated with Campbell’s restoration efforts. The March 1864 excerpt merely illustrates another Church of Christ who purchased a building owned by Cumberland Presbyterians. After all, the first building that Gallatin Christian Church owned was purchased from William Wright, who, in turn, had purchased it years before from Gallatin Cumberland Presbyterian Church. This is the church building pictured on the front of each issue of this newsletter. It was interesting, then, to find a similar kind of transaction happening in 1864 in Louisville, Kentucky.

⁷ “News from the Churches,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* New Series 7:7 (July 1843): p. 332.

⁸ “Reverend W. Pitts,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* Third Series 1:6 (June 1844): pp. 284-85. Upon my admittedly quick glances, I do not know why the shift in names from “F. E. Pitts” (above) to “W. Pitts.” I don’t know if these are different people, relatives in the same controversy, or if this is an error in writing of the same person.

⁹ G. W. Elley, “Elder F. E. Pitts and His Tracts on Campbellism,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* Third Series 2:3 (March 1845): pp. 113-18.

¹⁰ “Bethany College,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* Third Series 4:4 (April 1847): Extra p. 4 (after p. 240). The “P” is for “Peter,” a well-known figure in this area at this time.

¹¹ “Obituary,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* Fourth Series 1:5 (May 1851): p. 299.

¹² R. Milligan, “The State of Departed Spirits,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* Fifth Series 2:1 (January 1859): pp. 32-33. I have not researched the relation of Joseph Hubbard to Peter Hubbard.

¹³ “Monthly Summary,” in Campbell, *Harbinger* Fifth Series 7:3 (July 1864): pp. 93-94.