



# CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY

Gallatin Church of Christ

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In issue 3, I made a case for why I think Barton Stone and his associates planted seeds for the Christian Church movement in Sumner County in the 1810s. In this issue, I continue making this case, shifting from Stone's personal presence in the county to evidence that some Gallatin people were reading his monthly periodical in the 1820s and '30s.

## **Gallatin and *The Christian Messenger***

### **1826**

In the first issue of *The Christian Messenger*, November 1826, an obituary notes the following:

"Died, in July last, in Tennessee, Elder Daniel Travis. He was taken sick on a preaching tour, and died near Gallatin, before he could reach home, and before his family could see him. . . . For about twenty years, he had been a zealous, highly respected, and successful preacher of the gospel, in the Church of Christ. . . . His body lies interred in Gallatin."<sup>1</sup>

We learn that Daniel Travis had been laboring for the Christian Church/ Church of Christ movement from the early-1800s to 1826. He was laboring near Gallatin when he died, and he was buried in Gallatin.

On the next page of the same issue, in the list of agents for *The Christian Messenger* in Tennessee, we find an agent in Gallatin:

"Wm. Bell—*Gallatin*."<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to me that there is an agent in Gallatin listed in the very first issue of Stone's periodical. That is, it didn't take time for the periodical to become known in Gallatin. At least one person in Gallatin, William Bell, was connected enough to Stone's periodical to be listed as agent at the start of the periodical. I do not know anything about William Bell. Nor do I know how he came to be connected to Stone's *Christian Messenger*.

### **1827**

Three months later, "Wm. Bell, *Gallatin*" occurs again in the list of agents during the February 1827 issue.<sup>3</sup> We get no further details—just the name.

### **1828**

One year later, "Wm. Bell, *Gallatin*" occurs again.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barton W. Stone, "Obituary," in *The Christian Messenger* 1:1 (November 25, 1826): 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> Stone, "Agents," in *ibid.*: 24.

<sup>3</sup> Stone, "Agents," *CM* 1:4 (February 24, 1827): 74.

## 1831

Unless my browsings overlooked something, it was another three years before Gallatin was mentioned again. In 1831, however, William Bell is no longer alone:

*“Gallatin, Ten: By Geo. Crocket [sic] agent 5; of which 1 for J. Wallace, 1 for Sam Moore, 1 for S. Gourley, 1 for Wm. Bell, 1 for R. Winham.”*<sup>5</sup>

What this means is that, in August 1831, the Gallatin people named were receiving the fifth volume of Stone’s *Christian Messenger* to read, with George Crockett acting as agent. Presumably, Crockett would have been a reader as well. In addition, I imagine that these recipients of the *Messenger* would have shared it with others—either sharing the periodical itself, or discussing its contents with family, friends, and acquaintances. If my imaginings are correct, then perhaps well more than six people in Gallatin were aware of Stone’s journal and movement in 1831. The Christian Church idea was gaining a larger audience in Gallatin.

## 1832

Nearly a year later, Stone lists *“Gallatin—By G Crockett 4.”*<sup>6</sup> The recipients are not named.

## 1833

Over a year later, in the November 1833 issue, Stone lists receipts for subscribers in Gallatin:

*“Gallatin—By G. Crockett for I. Wallace; I. Moore; Wm. Bell, Gourley, M. Rogers, for 7.”*<sup>7</sup>

The “7” is a reference to the seventh volume of the *Messenger*. The last names listed are mostly repeats from 1831, the exception being Rogers. The “I.” before Wallace and Moore is unclear to me. I do not think it would be a first initial; an 1831 issue gave a “J.” for Wallace and “Sam” for Moore. Perhaps the “I.” is a number—to indicate one issue each?—but why not place an “I.” before the other three names? Regardless, the addition of Rogers to the previous readers increases the number of Gallatin people aware of Stone’s periodical and movement to, at a *minimum*, seven—Crockett, Wallace, Moore, Gourley, Bell, Winham, and Rogers.

## 1834

In June 1834, Stone lists *“Gallatin. Crockett for his agency in full for vol. 8. \$5.00.”*<sup>8</sup>

As William Bell was at first, so now has George Crockett become an important connection for Gallatin to Stone’s *Christian Messenger*. I do not know William Bell’s or George Crockett’s religious affiliation. If that is discovered, it might provide further clues to the emergence of a Christian Church in Gallatin.

With space almost gone for this issue of *Congregational History*, let me summarize the above findings: Christian Church Elder Daniel Travis died near Gallatin and was buried here. William Bell of Gallatin was the Gallatin agent for the *Christian Messenger* in 1826, 1827, and 1828. By 1831, Gallatin had at least five or six recipients and readers of the *Messenger*. That number increased to at least seven, and likely more, by 1833. To say the least, in the 1830s, gradually more and more people in Gallatin were becoming aware of Stone’s Kentucky-based Christian Church beliefs and movement.

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<sup>4</sup> Stone, “Agents,” in CM 2:4 (February 1828): 96.

<sup>5</sup> Stone, “Receipts from June 1st to August 1st,” in CM 5:8 (August 1831): 192. Note: I believe “Crocket” should be spelled “Crockett.”

<sup>6</sup> Stone, “Agents,” in CM 6:7 (July 1832): 224.

<sup>7</sup> Stone, “Receipts for November,” in CM 7:11 (November 1833): 352.

<sup>8</sup> Stone, “Receipts, in CM 8:6 (June 1834): 192. I need to verify the page number.