



CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY

Gallatin Church of Christ

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Issue 6

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A Summary of *Congregational History*

-Issues 3-5

1796: Barton Stone, a Presbyterian preacher en route to Kentucky, visited Bledsoe Creek, Shiloh, Mansker Creek, and other Cumberland settlements.

1801: Stone participated in the revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky.

1803-1804: Stone and others in Kentucky left the Presbyterian Church and commenced the Christian Church movement in Kentucky and surrounding areas.

1811: Stone, as a Christian Church leader, preached at a Sumner County farm, at Bledsoe Creek, and at Hopewell.

1812: Stone lived on the Bowen farm in Sumner County for a year.

1826: A Christian Church preaching tour included some place near Gallatin.

1826, 1827, 1828, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834: People in Gallatin were reading Stone's Christian Church publication, *The Christian Messenger*.

1834: The Sylvan Church (later Old Union Church of Christ) began, east of Gallatin.

1835, 1836: People in Gallatin were reading Stone's *Messenger*.

1842: Two Christian Church evangelists labored in Gallatin.

-Issue 2

<1850: The Christian Church had a congregation in Gallatin.¹

<1861: Gallatin Church of Christ (or Christian Church) met regularly at the court house.²

1866: The Gallatin Christian Church met at the home of George Foster.³

1870: Gallatin Christian Church purchased its first building.⁴

-Assessment

I present the above findings in chronological order to demonstrate my goal: to determine the link between the Christian Church movement and the Gallatin Christian Church. Of special interest as well are the apparently *distinct* histories of Sylvan Church (Old Union) and Gallatin Christian Church in this period—two churches of the *same* movement(s) in the *same* relative

¹ According to Walter Durham and to Tom Bradshaw (→ Julius Hovan)

² According to the Sumner County teachers history of the mid-1900s

³ According to Mrs. J. B. Malone in 1913/1914 newspaper article

⁴ According to the history compiled by Nannie Dunn Jones Draper and deed records

area within *similar* time frames. Sylvan has a documented starting date and early history; Gallatin does not. The 1826 preaching tour, the *Christian Messenger* readers of the 1820s and '30s, and the 1842 evangelistic work in Gallatin, are all suggestive, but far from defining the beginnings of a Christian Church in Gallatin proper.

Gallatin Church Options in the 1820s, '30s, and '40s

As a general trend, Christian Churches/ Churches of Christ gained members in two ways: brand new converts, and converts from other churches. As I reflect on Stone's personal connections in Sumner County, his preaching in the area, and his steady readership in Gallatin, I imagine seeds being planted for a Christian Church in Gallatin. But those seeds weren't planted in a vacuum. For example, readers of Stone's *Messenger* in Gallatin were likely members of churches by other names. This raises the question, What church options were available to people in Gallatin during the years the *Messenger* was being read here?

-Presbyterian

1793: Shiloh Presbyterian Church officially began east of Gallatin.⁵

<1800: Hopewell Presbyterian Church, also east of Gallatin, organized with the help of Shiloh Church.⁶

1811: The Cumberland Presbyterian movement began in Sumner County. (See 1830.)

1828: First Presbyterian Church began with the help of Shiloh. It first met at a brick church building in town for use by any denomination.⁷ It completed its own building in 1837.⁸

≤1830: Gallatin Cumberland Presbyterian Church had its own building.⁹

1840s: Temporary division within First Presbyterian Church.¹⁰

-Baptist

1796: El Bethel Baptist Church had a meeting house on East Station Camp Creek.¹¹

<1800: Hopewell Baptist Church began.¹²

(To Be Continued in Issue 7)

⁵ Walter Durham, *The Great Leap Westward*, p. 151. It was this church that Barton Stone visited in 1796, finding there his friends William McGee and John Anderson (Stone, *A Short History*, p. 52).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 160. Hopewell was one area where Barton Stone preached in 1811 as a Christian Church leader (Grant, "Sketch of the Reformation in Tennessee," pp. 9-10). Hopewell was also one area in which the Sylvan Church (of Christ) met at least as early as 1845 (Fanning, *Christian Review* [December 1845]: 282). Some charter members of the Sylvan Church in 1834 may have been from Hopewell Presbyterian. Christian Church evangelists Johnson and Rice worked at Hopewell (presumably Sylvan Church) in 1842 (Stone, *Messenger* [September 1842]: 351-52).

⁷ Durham, *Old Sumner*, p. 327, also p. 160.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 160, 338. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church later sold this building to William Wright, who used it as a woolen factory. In 1870 Gallatin Christian Church bought this building from William Wright.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 329. I note this here because sometimes members of a church experiencing division will leave for another church—even a church of a different name.

¹¹ Durham, *Great Leap*, p. 161. Clifton Allen, preacher of El Bethel, left the Baptist Church altogether in 1801 after El Bethel put him on trial for communing with Methodists and Presbyterians at a joint meeting at Shiloh.

¹² *Ibid.* Note that it was around this time that the Hopewell Presbyterian Church organized. The Sylvan Church (of Christ) may have pulled members away from Hopewell Baptist. And, recall from note 2 that Barton Stone preached in the area of Hopewell in 1811 as a Christian Church leader.