

Spring 2015

**Special points of interest:**

- Lots of photos
- Stories from local newspapers

**Inside this issue:**

*A Preservationist* 2  
by David Neidert

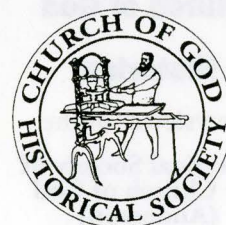
*Guess Who? contest* 3

*Fires of the Gospel Trumpet* 4-7

*Private GT Fire Department* 8

**Newsletter of the  
Historical Society of  
the Church of God  
(Anderson)**

# The Church of God Historian



## Fires of the Gospel Trumpet *by David Neidert, editor*

When I meet with Dale Stultz occasionally, we talk first around this question: "So, Dale, what have you been doing lately?" It's then he clears the video monitors of his current work to show me files...lots of files housing photos and bits of information he's been collecting since our last visit.

On this particular visit, one of the files contained photos of fires. Fires of the Gospel Trumpet from various times and places. In this issue, we will cover just a little of the stories around these photos. What was interesting to me was the fires took place at each of the GT locations...Grand Junction, Moundsville, and Anderson. Now, if I was a conspiracy theorist, I would say something was afoot. They are rather peculiar and EE Byrum reports in a newspaper interview that two of them were suspicious.

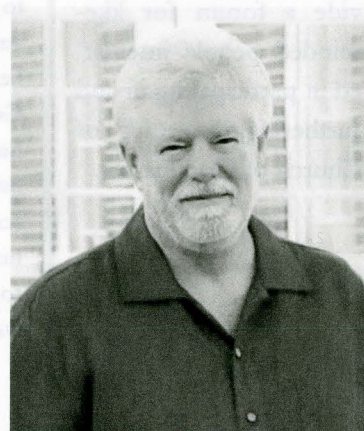
This issue explores the fires, but not just from the Gospel Trumpet. I am a subscriber and heavy user of

Ancestry.com. I am working on family histories and find this tool of significant value. One of the add-ons a person may use is Newspapers.com (for a small fee of course). It is a little less user friendly, but it has millions of US newspaper pages with more being added every day. What I found exciting for this issue is that a number of newspapers give us a third party account of these fires, particularly in Moundsville and Anderson. It is here I turned for much of this newsletter's stories. I think you will enjoy what was reported.

After the files on the monitors were all opened and discussed, I wanted to talk about Dale. The question was "why do you do what you do and why are you interested in this work?" I've always wanted to have that conversation with him. Dale is humble in this way. He doesn't tell you much about the work normally, but when you pin him down,

his love for the Church of God reformation movement, its history and more importantly its people bubbles to the surface. Dale loves what he does because in the end it is not about photos or stories, but about people; those he has connected over the years who have lost contact with family as generations get bigger and more disbursed as marriages happen. That's what is really important to Dale, generations of the Church being connected to their heritage.

I trust you will enjoy this issue and the newspapers that add an outside observation about the Church of God. If you like this, wait until the next issue.





## Church of God Historian

Newsletter of the  
Historical Society of  
the Church of God  
(Anderson)

Vol 15 No 2  
Spring 2015

This newsletter is published three times a year: Fall; Winter; and Spring. It is published by the Society on behalf of its members. Printed in Anderson, Indiana.

## The Historical Society Purpose

The Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson) exists to encourage the collection and preservation of artifacts and documents relating to the history of the Church of God; to encourage historical research and the writing concerning Church of God history; and to provide a forum for like-minded people interested in participating in and furthering the study of Church of God history.

## The Historical Society's Preservationist *By David Neidert*

Organizations are often identified as a collection. We use phrases like "that group or institution" or "those people (plural)." In reality, "that group" is composed, not of the faceless "they," but of people, individuals who in the aggregate are "that thing."

The Historical Society is no different. It is identified as a collective, even for charitable gift purposes. But the Society is comprised of people, many who love the history of the Church of God movement and are regularly trying to understand the nuances of this group and its place in the historical line. One such individual, who adds passion and a fierce focus on the movement's history, is Dale Stultz.

Dale is what I would term a "materials preservationist." While the term is normally associated with the natural world, Dale is one who is laser focused on conserving the Church of God's history, both well known or little understood.<sup>1</sup> Dale's desire to preserve the Church's heritage takes him to places across the country, sometimes meeting with families he may only know through the Gospel Trumpet, or spending hundreds of hours before the two monitors in this office loft scanning the internet for pictures, places, and faces we have forgotten sometime along the way.

So why spend such

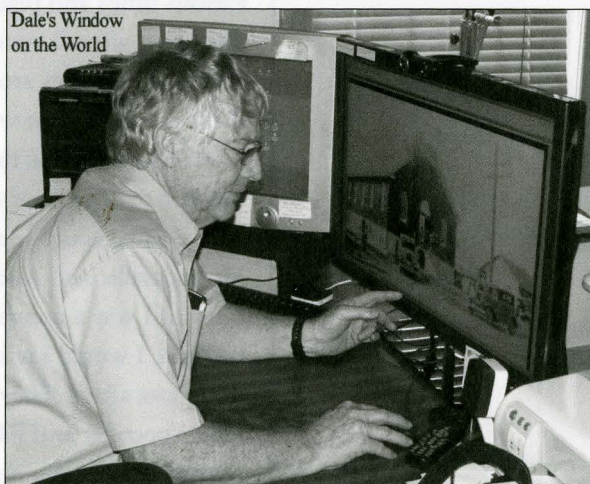
time and personal resources in pursuit of the Church's heritage? "I do it because it helps people remember their place in the story," commented Dale. "People want to share in the legacy. That seems to me the reason they give the Historical Society photos, family letters, and other materials....so that a single family legacy can add to the big story of the Church of God."

Dale often sparks this passion in the people and audiences he encounters when sharing about the Society or selling a book at a trade fair. A person may write Dale or call him and ask how they can connect their family with the roots of the reformation movement. A letter or photograph that has made its rounds among family members may ultimately find a home in the loft office with hundreds of other "artifacts" that connect the story piece by piece. These are family treasures and Stultz gives them the honor they deserve.

Stultz, however, is not just on the receiving end of

historical information. His hours of research also produce interesting connections and finds because of his talent in the visual arts. Reading a story and seeing a picture are two different, but powerfully connected elements. Dale will painstakingly trace a railroad line mentioned in a Church of God narrative, plotting depots, cities, and other locales on time period appropriate maps. This eye for detail adds significantly to the story and may correct or surprise us with new information.... something of interest that a historical writer, familiar with the scenery, may leave out and only say, "Oh yes, I forgot about that" if we could engage them in a conversation.

The ultimate service, however, that Dale brings to the



Society and the Church is his passion for connecting people. It is amazing how Stultz brings together family members long

**Continued on page 3**



## Guess Who?

Take a good, long look? Who is this young man?

This is a way for you to let us know what you know! This picture is one of the Church of God pioneers. Send us your guess and you may win a FREE copy of "Old Main" published by the Historical Society.

Here are the rules for this opportunity:

- Send your answer to the editor by email: [dlneidert@anderson.edu](mailto:dlneidert@anderson.edu) or by US mail to: David Neidert, Anderson University, 1100 E 5th St., Anderson, IN, 46012-3495.
- Your email must be posted by midnight, Monday, April 6, 2015.
- Your US Mail must be POSTMARKED by Monday, April 6, 2015.
- All correct answers received will be placed in a drawing. The correct response from this group will be chosen randomly from all correct entries.
- One entry per member.

The winner will be notified and the book mailed

to them. The winner's name will also be posted in the Summer 2015 newsletter.

So, take a good, long look....Who is this young man?



## Continued from Page Two:

separated from each other by geography or dozens of marriages over time that change names, places, and allow the underlying history of its lineage to be forgotten. At this, Dale often smiles, remembering the reunions, connections, and surprises families often experience because of his tenacity and desire to piece the memories together.

Yes, a preservationist in the highest sense of the meaning. The Historical Society is lucky, truly, because Dale believes in legacy, preservation, connections, and piecing together the family story a photograph or letter at a time.

See the article in the *Historian* Vol 10 No 1 Fall 2000 issue of a reunion of Barney Warren descendants: <http://choghistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Historian-Fall-2009.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> Webster's Dictionary defines a preservationist as "someone who works to preserve something (such as a building or an area of land)." This describes Dale, sort of. Dale works to protect and prevent the loss of resources important to the Church. But more than this, he works to preserve the story.



## Fires of the Gospel Trumpet Company *by David Neidert with Dale Stultz*

### ***FIRE!***

When screamed, this word brings terror to those within ear-shot. Reaction to this clarion is multitude...some rush to help, others stand in confusion, or still others become overwhelmed with emotion connected to the property now ablaze.

The Gospel Trumpet has had a number of fires in its history, each at various locations. Dale Stultz has been tracking these disasters through pictures while the Trumpets occasionally themselves hold the story.

The first fire took place in Grand Junction (MI). The fire happened after the Trumpet Offices had packed up and left for Moundsville (WV) on "Tuesday, July 28." The eyewitness account published in the Gospel Trumpet (September 1, 1898) was written by J.A. Wilber who helped Brother

### **Trumpet buildings consumed**



John H. Merica fight the fire along with his sons and a few other volunteers.

The task of workers who volunteered to help the company was stack paper for its return to the mills and clean the buildings for sale. These volunteers worked on this project all day July 29. It was on this day that an ember from a "passing train" fanned by strong winds from the southwest set the building ablaze "inside and out." The heat and flames were intense, being fed by the dry wooden buildings. The flames "jumped

the street" and began burning other structures. The team of volunteers focused on saving the Byrum House. As the roof caught fire in "five or six places at once," Wilber, Merica and an unidentified young man took occasional refuge behind the chimney as they worked to wet the roof and extinguish the flames. It was through prayer, buckets of water and God's mercy "in the subsiding of the raging fire," they were able to save the Byrum House.<sup>1</sup> Wil-

ber, in the coming months, would tell the story at camp meetings. His testimony brought many to the altars.

### **Ash mounds behind those in the picture.**



After the fire in Grand Junction.

Continued on page 5



## Fires Continued from page four



Another fire was at the Old People's Home in Anderson.<sup>2</sup> The Old People's Home was to be a significant addition to the Gospel Trumpet ministry. The intended purpose of this facility was to care for the elderly of the Church of God. An initial gift of \$10,000 was given by a women in Ohio with more gifts rapidly following. A Board of Trustees was selected and the "Anderson Old People's Home Association" was incorporated under the Charitable Laws of the State of Indiana.<sup>3</sup>

The Home was to be a "modern building" with electric lights, elevator, hot and cold water on each floor, a dining room, library and more.<sup>4</sup> The building, containing 40 rooms, "was being rushed to completion so it could be occupied the first of January (1908).<sup>5</sup> "(The Home) was built by cash contributions totaling \$30,000."<sup>6</sup>

However, a fire of

"mysterious origin" started at 2:30 a.m.<sup>7</sup> in the building's second story. <sup>8</sup> The building had been swept and prepared for inspection in the coming days.

There was indication of incendiary materials used to start the fire, but neither the motive nor individuals were known at the time.<sup>9</sup> The Trumpet officials did consider some suspects, but would not talk about their suspicions.<sup>10</sup>

The Trumpet did not have in-

surance on the building, but a "petition for insurance had been signed the week before."<sup>11</sup> The walls, made of cement, did not buckle or crack, though some of the steel beams did bend. E.E. Byrum reported that the Home would be rebuilt "in the spring."<sup>12</sup> Yet, the donations began coming in so fast, "\$1 to \$100 from all over the country," that rebuilding began immediately.<sup>13</sup> It was also noted that "friends are coming from all parts of the country to help rebuild the old folks' home of the Gospel Trumpet people at Anderson."<sup>14</sup>

There was a third interesting fire mentioned by EE Byrum during an interview about the Old People's Home in December 1907. The Indianapolis News

*Continued on page 6*





## Fires continued from page five

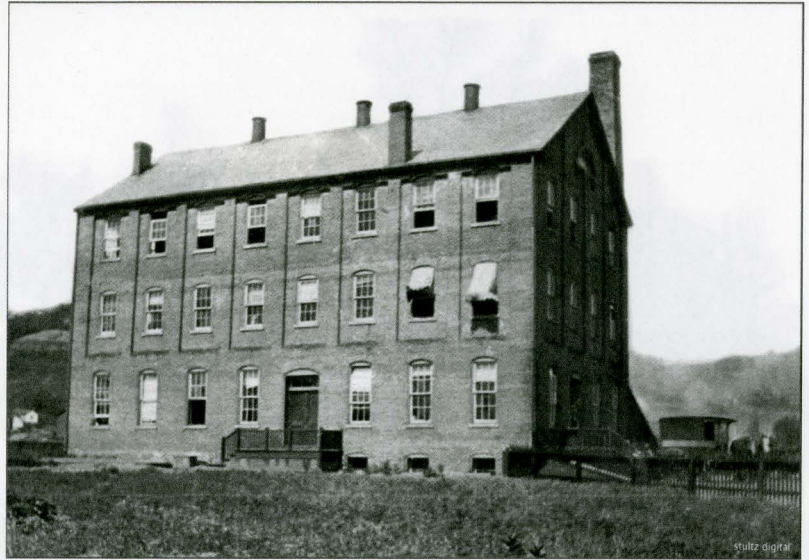
reported: "While the Gospel Trumpet Company was located at Moundsville, W. Va., several years ago, one of its buildings was set on fire and during the excitement burglars entered the main building, cracked a safe and got considerable money. No robbery followed the fire yesterday, however."<sup>15</sup>

In researching this article, no corroboration of this statement or fire could be located in the Gospel Trumpet issues. However, it can be verified that a building belonging to the Gospel Trumpet and possibly awaiting sale did burn down in 1913. The article from the *Indiana Gazette* (PA) reports, "Lightening struck the Gospel Trumpet building at Moundsville and the building valued at \$18,000 and

contents valued at \$20,000 were totally destroyed. The building was used as a broom factory."<sup>16</sup>

Fires...unfortunately, the Gospel Trumpet had a few in its history. The Old People's home was rebuilt and did add significantly to the early ministry in Anderson.

<sup>1</sup> The story is excerpted from a long eyewitness account of J.A. Wilber in the *Gospel Trumpet*, September 1, 1898.



This section on the Old People's Home was written, not from Gospel Trumpets, but from the area newspapers of Indiana.

<sup>3</sup>Anderson Old People's Home, historical brochure, nd.

<sup>4</sup>*The Call-Leader*, Elwood, Indiana, 10 Dec 1907, Tuesday, Page 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. The third floor was already finished.

<sup>6</sup> *The Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis, Indiana, 10 Dec 1907 pg 16.

<sup>7</sup> *The Call-Leader*, Elwood, Indiana, 10 Dec 1907, Tuesday, Page 1.

<sup>8</sup> *The Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis, Indiana, 9 Dec 1907, Monday, Page 1.

<sup>9</sup> *The Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis, Indiana, 10 Dec 1907 pg 16; *The Call-Leader*, Elwood, Indiana, 10 Dec 1907, Tuesday, Page 1.

**Continued on page 7**





## Fire footnotes from page six

<sup>10</sup> *The Call-Leader*, Elwood, Indiana, 11 Dec 1907, Tuesday, Page 1. A statement that a “tramp” may have gained access to the building and started the fire was one comment made by officials.

<sup>11</sup> *The Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis, Indiana, 9 Dec 1907, Monday, Page 1, *The Waterloo Press*, Waterloo, Indiana, 26 Dec 1907, Thursday, Page 7

<sup>12</sup> *The Call-Leader*, Elwood, Indiana, 11 Dec 1907, Tuesday, Page 1; *The Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis, Indiana, 10 Dec 1907 pg 16.

<sup>13</sup> *The Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis, Indiana, 30 Dec 1907, Monday, Page 4.

<sup>14</sup> *The Call-Leader* Elwood IN, “Personal and Pertinent,” 30 Dec. 1907, pg 5.

<sup>15</sup> *The Indianapolis News*, Indianapolis Indiana, 10 Dec 1907, pg 16.

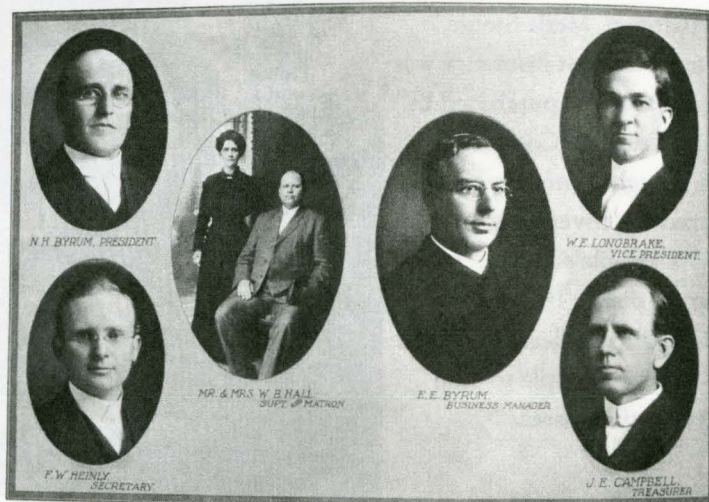
<sup>16</sup> *The Indiana Gazette* (Indiana, PA), Monday, June 2, 1913, pg 2.

ANDERSON HOME FOR OLD FOLKS. OWNED AND OPERATED BY GOSPEL TRUMPET CO., ANDERSON, IND.—3



Early residents of the Old People's Home. Sister Mary Cole is sitting next to the piano.

Administrators of the Old People's Home, Anderson, Indiana.





The Historical Society of the Church  
of God

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Membership to the Society is open to all who are vitally interested in  
what the Society desires to accomplish as stated in its purpose. Member-  
ship dues are \$15 per year (\$10 for students.) Checks should be made  
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**Expanding Readership....help us help the Society.** The long term  
viability of the *Historian* counts on increased readership. Help us tell  
the story by sharing the newsletter with friends, relatives, your church  
and others.

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**Private Fire Department of the Gospel Trumpet** Photo supplied by Dale Stultz

Fires change the way we  
prepare. This private fire depart-  
ment for the Gospel Trum-  
pet was built (or may have  
been a barn already in use  
but its purpose changed)  
after the fires experienced.  
*Historian*, Merle Strege,  
indicated that insurance was  
probably not purchased by  
the Trumpet Company,  
although some was consid-  
ered for coverage of the  
Old People's Home. (see the  
article inside) If there was no  
insurance, at least there  
would be people to stop  
any future losses.

