

# Church of God Historian

Historical Society of the Church of God Vol 11 No 2 Winter 2011

## AN AVID COLLECTOR OF LOCAL CHURCH OF GOD HISTORY

In the Summer of 2010, when I was speaking at the White Hall Camp Meeting (known in the early days as the Emlenton, Pennsylvania Camp Meeting), an older gentleman, Allen Moore, appeared to be very enthused about our Church of God history. He asked some excellent and insightful questions. He later told me that as a boy he had lived in the Park Place area of Anderson between the homes of Noah Byrum and Warner Clayton (whose father built the Floating

Bethel). Allen is a self-confessed "trash-picker" and collects all kinds of old things of historical interest.

He told me that when he was going through the Clayton 'trash,' he found several old tin-types relating to Church of God history and after Noah died, he helped Ruthven and Merle Byrum clean out the Noah Byrum home., where he obtained a number of historical artifacts relating to the lives of Noah and Isabel Byrum and their family (such as the lamp he is shown below holding).

To my surprise, I learned that Allen lived nearby in Kokomo IN. Doug Welch and I visited him this past January and had a wonderful time as he displayed many historical items and shared stories from his years of 'pack-rattin' of Church of God artifacts and photographs (some of which are to be found on pages six and seven of this newsletter—and we hope to use many others in our forthcoming book, *The Gospel Trumpet Years*).

— D.E. Stultz



Allen Moore with Isabel Byrum's Chair



## ***Church of God Historian***

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

**Vol 11 No 2 Winter 2011**

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*Church of God Historian* is managed by the Executive Committee of the Society. Merle D. Strege, President, Dale E. Stultz, Vice-President, Sadie B. Evans, Secretary-Treasurer, D.E. Welch, Publisher and Managing Editor.

## **The Historical Society**

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 of 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.

Membership is open to all who are vitally interested in what the Society desires to accomplish. Membership dues are \$15 per year (\$10 for students.) Checks should be made out to *Historical Society of the Church of God* and sent to Box 702, Anderson IN 46015.



**Above:** D. Welch and Allen Moore discuss historical photos  
**Below:** Allen Moore as an infant, Anderson, Christmas 1929



**Unfortunately, in spite of our efforts to do so, we have still not received anticipated information and photos concerning the West Middlesex Camp Meeting. We hope we shall have these for you in time for the Spring issue of the *Church of God Historian* – Editor**



## EDUCATING FOR CHANGE

Between 1912 and 1918 leading figures in the Church of God embarked on a publishing project intended to educate and change the church and its ministry. Forgotten or little known today, *Our Ministerial Letter* played an important role during a critical decade in the history of the Church of God. In a very real sense, the newsletter's topics set the stage for the organizational revolution that began in the movement in 1917. It is not too much to say that agenda of *Our Ministerial Letter* was to educate for change.

The first major indication of a change in attitude toward organization had come in 1909 with the creation of the Missionary Committee. Not yet a true independent board or agency, the committee actually existed as a committee of the Gospel Trumpet Company. The committee did have a kind of supervisory role with missionaries, but its principal reason for being was fundraising in support of missionaries on the field.

Over the next three years the committee perpetually labored at this assignment but fell far short of its financial goals. So it was that in the autumn of 1912 members decided to publish a monthly newsletter. The decision was announced in a pamphlet distributed that November under the title "Our Missionary Work."

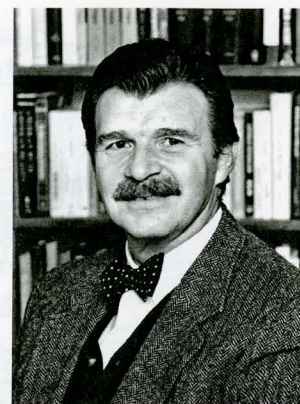
In effect the pamphlet was the newsletter's first number. Responses were enthusiastic, and for six months the newsletter was sent free of charge to "all ministers whose names and addresses could be obtained." (Remember, the first yearbook did not appear until 1917, and published lists of ministers were only as reliable as the degree of ministerial cooperation). At the 1913 Campmeeting the Missionary Committee decided it could no longer subsidize the newsletter, but one year later min-

isters requested that it be restarted. At that time a subscription plan was developed, and *Our Ministerial Letter* began a run that lasted until 1918. A subscription cost \$.50/year, but many ministers failed to pay their bills until finally financial losses brought an end to the publication in 1918.

More than the simple details of its life and death, the newsletter's compelling interest lies in the list of its contributors and its influence on the sweeping organizational changes that unfolded in the Church of God just as the newsletter's run was concluding. The newsletter's committee named sixteen men and one woman as a kind of contributing editors. Space does not permit the full roster to be listed here but its names read like a list of the movers and shakers in the movement for the next twenty-five years, including such individuals as F. G. Smith, R. R. Byrum, H. M. Riggle, Lena Shofner Mattheson, E. A. Reardon, J. T. Wilson, and others.

Nor was the roster limited to Americans; another regular contributor to the newsletter was J. J. M. Roy, a leader in the Church of God in India. The contributors either were or soon became prominent leaders in the church during an era of great change. The subjects they addressed strongly suggest that they wrote with a view toward advancing change in the church.

The very first essay to appear was written by J. W. Phelps, representing the Missionary Committee. His subject was tithing—planned systematic giving. If the committee was to disburse funds in support of missionaries, a budget and a reasonable regular flow of contributions was essential. But in 1912 majority opinion in the movement held that tithing was unbiblical, an outdated relic of Old Testament law. With budget levels far short



**Merle D. Strege**  
Historian of the Church of God

of minimal support goals, Phelps set out to educate ministers about tithing's importance and biblical legitimacy. Other contributors followed his lead. So, for example, Russell Byrum published a forceful essay on ministerial education titled "The Preacher Among his Books," including a list of requisite titles and strong language about the discipline of reading. Most of the essays in *Our Ministerial Letter* were neither brief nor fluff. Thus we find J.J. M. Roy's twenty page essay on the psychology of hermeneutics.

The organizing committee stated three goals for the little publication. They wanted to provide a vehicle through which ministers could exchange opinions on matters of vital interest to the church. They also sought to provide a means by which more experienced ministers could instruct their younger, less experienced colleagues in the practical arts of ministry. Lastly, the committee hoped to advance among their readers the realization that they were not isolated individuals but members of a worldwide movement.

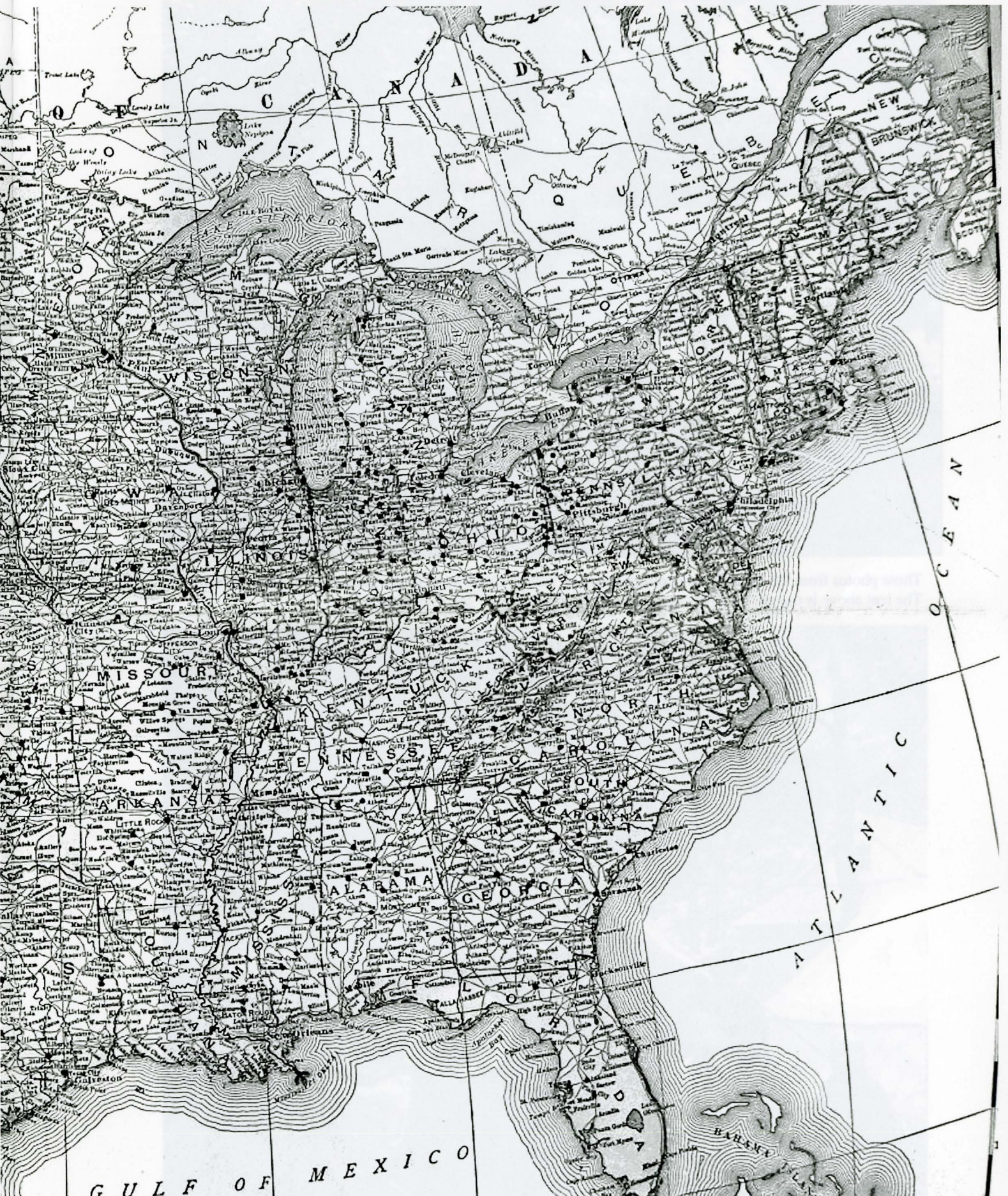
Alongside stated goals, however, we must consider the effect which *Our Ministerial Letter* had on the Church of God movement. Five years after the appearance of the newsletter's first number, ministers of the General Assembly established the yearbook and the General Ministerial Assembly. Those were only the opening notes





This map shows the congregations of the Church of God (Anderson) c. 1920 as black dots on  
 Congregations then numbered about 735 or so. Most were quite small and only about ha





the map. It will appear in a much more readable form in *The Gospel Trumpet Years: 1881-1961* if of them had their own church buildings—and largely confined to the central and eastern States.





These photos from the Allen Moore collection are of Yellow Creek Lake Camp Meeting in Indiana in 1907. The tent above is that of the Pikes and Palmers. That below is of the Rumbaughs.





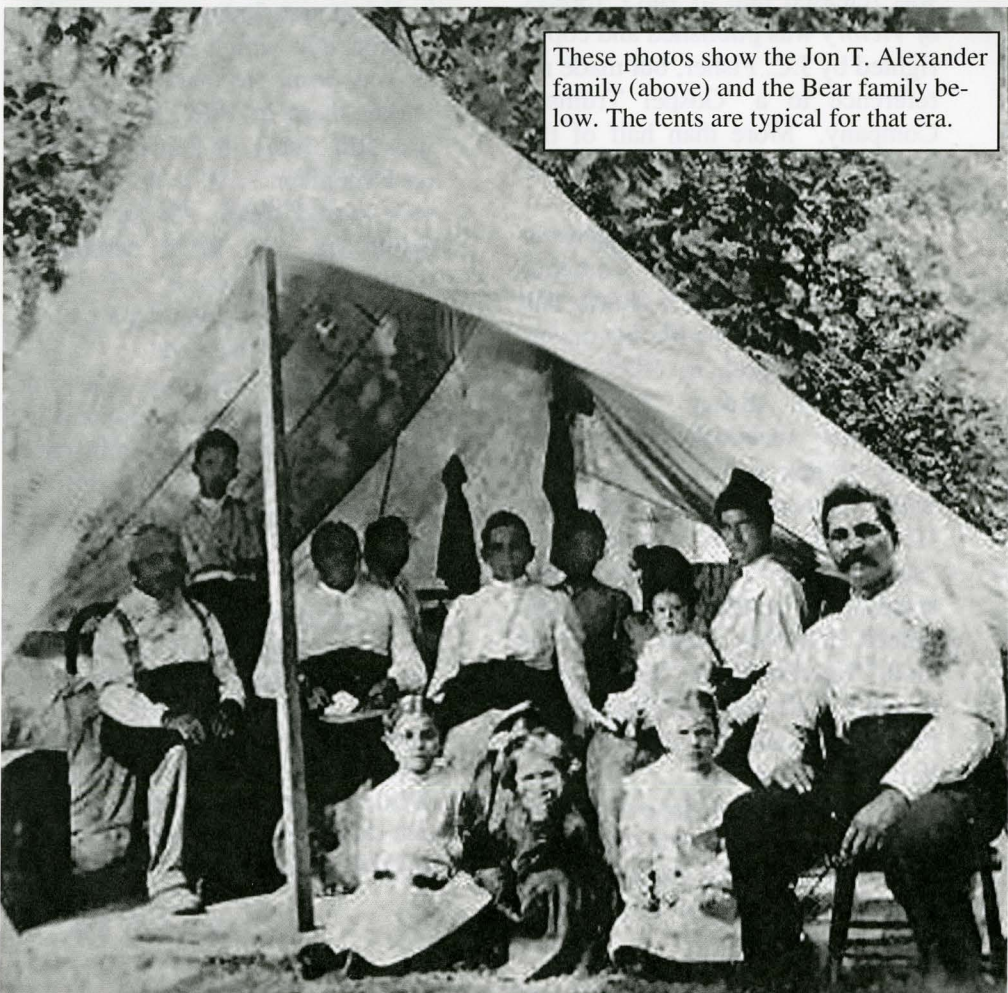
## Camp Meeting Yellow Creek Lake 1907

The camp meeting at Yellow Creek Lake, Indiana (preceded by Beaver Dam Camp Meeting, which was held in various places around Beaver Dam, Indiana even in the time of D.S. Warner) first began meeting on its present campgrounds in 1897. Rick Blumenberg writes of this in his book, *Standing With the Saints* (1997). He says,

“In 1897 the saints met on the south banks of Yellow Creek Lake. We’re not sure what the arrangements were that first year, but it seems they used the land for a meeting the first year while raising funds to pay for it, clearing enough trees to erect a tent in which services were held. Land they acquired in 1897 was called the Saints Campground, the Church of God Campground or Yellow Creek Lake Campground. It was also known as Claypool, Burkett, or Silver Lake Campmeeting, after nearby railroad stations.... Whatever it is called, it is ‘home’ for the Saints in northern Indiana” (p.16).

Noah Byrum traveled to the first camp meeting held at Yellow Creek Lake to sell Gospel Trumpet literature. He writes,

“In the Spring of 1897, the Beaver Dam campground had been abandoned. Eight miles east, on the south shore of beautiful Yellow Lake was to be the new campground. A tract of twelve acres, well shaded with small trees, was purchased for \$600....The meeting was advertised that year as the Burket, Indiana camp meeting, since the town was not far away from the campground....It was late afternoon when my train arrived at Claypool....Having brought my bicycle along, I arranged to ride the distance” (*Book of Noah*, 244).



These photos show the Jon T. Alexander family (above) and the Bear family below. The tents are typical for that era.



## Henry R. Jeffrey

Henry R. Jeffrey (his full name, but used only once in print and then by someone else), for so prominent a part of the J.C. Fisher 'movement,' has proven rather difficult for us to track historically. He first wrote for *The Gospel Trumpet* in 1882 when it was being published in Cardington, Ohio, praising the "holiness revival" and the teachings of sanctification and Christian unity. He seemed then to be opposed to the "comeout" movement—which makes us wonder why his article appeared in the *GT*. Warner notes that "Dear Bro. H.R. Jeffrey from Wabash also attended the [Beaver Dam] meeting for a few days" (*The Gospel Trumpet*, March 1, 1885).

From a later article by Mary E. Jeffrey, we learn that her husband, H.R. Jeffrey, went to Williamston in May, 1885 to assist J.C. Fisher in "making a new song book" (*GT* Aug 1, 1885), which, apparently, was released late in 1885. (*Songs of Victory* was published and copyrighted by J.C. Fisher, but made no reference to a 'Gospel Trumpet Company.' More than half of the songs in the book were composed by H.R. Jeffrey.)

Jeffrey later wrote an extensive article entitled "The Comeout Movement" (*GT* Jul 1 1886). His "first acquaintance with this movement" dated back to 1877. After attending many Holiness "comeout" meetings and reading many of their periodicals, he eventually came into contact with Bros. J.C. Fisher and D.S. Warner. Their "success" in "gathering many sheaves of golden wheat" convinced him they were "called of God." He concludes: "And though I cannot understand all they do and teach, I can with joy and hope bid them God's speed...."

That seems to have been the last article he wrote for the *Trumpet*, which shortly thereafter reverted to Warner's full control dur-

ing the early days in Grand Junction. He appears to have kept in contact with the *Trumpet*, occasionally contributing new hymns for publication, a few of which appeared in *Songs of the Evening Light*, (only "Zion's Onward March,") published by the Gospel Trumpet Company in 1897, and *Select Hymns*, published in 1911 (which includes two new hymns by Jeffrey). The last of these appeared in the *Trumpet* in June, 1889. After that, we hear no more of him.

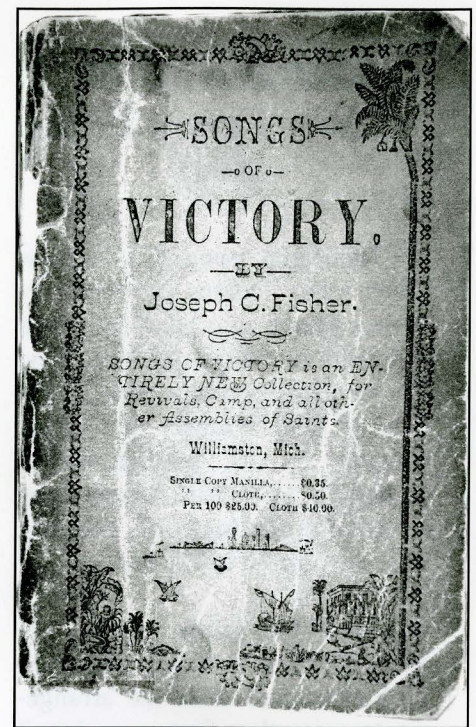
It may be that Jeffrey, like many other adherents of the Holiness Movement, never did become a part of the 'the church of God reformation movement' even after prolonged contact with it. Many appreciated the 'light' on 'the church of God,' but disliked the strident 'comeoutism' of the Warner movement and that fact that Warner and his associates believed Biblical prophecy pointed exclusively to themselves.

According to the U.S. Census for 1880, H.R. Jeffrey was living in Fairmount, Indiana (just outside Marion IN), which is likely where he was born. He married Mary E. Parker there in 1867. In 1900, he was still living in Fairmount, and on December 1, 1911, he died and was buried there. As far as we know, he was never associated with the Church of God (Anderson), but remained a part of the Holiness Movement.

Yet, those among us who sing the old 'reformation movement' songs are bound to sing both lyrics and music written by Jeffrey. Some of his music, at least, stayed with us—even if he did not.

*This is taken from one of the Appendices in our forthcoming book, The Gospel Trumpet Years: 1881-1961. It is part of a longer Appendix entitled, "Whatever Became of...?" This Appendix is concerned with a number of persons who were an important part of our early history, but who later, for one reason or another, 'disappeared.'*

D. Stultz & D. Welch



Over half of the 94 songs in this book were written or composed by Henry R. Jeffrey. He provided words and music for 36 songs and composed the music for 12 others.

### Strege, cont'd from Page 3)

of a chorus of changes in the movement's organization between 1917 and 1930.

It would be too much to say that *Our Ministerial Letter* caused those changes. But certainly those changes can be said to have grown from seeds planted in soil nourished by the newsletter during its brief but very significant life.

We are halfway through the 2010-2011 year and some of you have not yet sent in your annual dues. We are sure this is just an oversight on your part. You have intended for several months now to send us a check (only \$15). Why not do that right away? Thank you!