

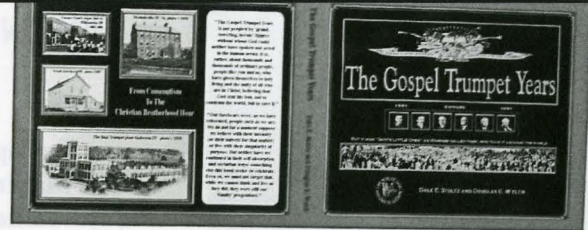
# Church of God Historian

Historical Society of the Church of God

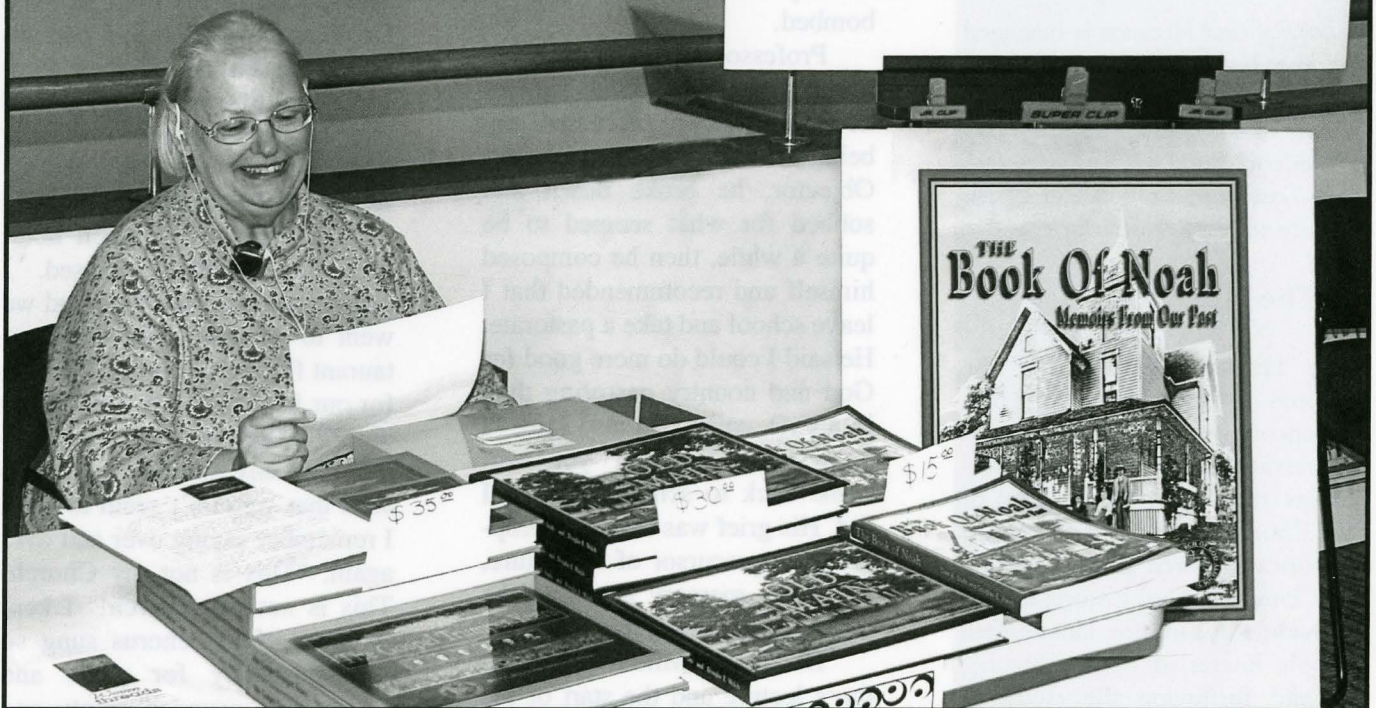
Volume 12 Number 2 Winter 2012

Sadie Evans represents the Historical Society at a recent book fair sponsored by Anderson Public Library.

Books and memberships were available to all who were interested.



Historical Society of the Church of God



## THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT WORK

It was an honor for us to represent the Historical Society at a recent book fair sponsored by Anderson Public Library. Our host for the occasion was Beth Oljace, head of the Indiana Room of the Library. We believe that every public library ought to have a copy of *The Gospel Trum*

*-pet Years* available for its patrons, especially in those towns and cities in which the Church of God (Anderson) is established.

Even in long-standing congregations of the Church of God, we find that few people actually know how the Church of God (Anderson) came into being.

Both *The Book of Noah* and *The Gospel Trumpet Years* were published to address this particular concern. (*Old Main* is about the central role of Anderson College in our historical journey.)

The crucial work of the Society goes on. It cannot be done, however, without your support.

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

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

**Vol 12 No 2 Winter 2012**

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

All correspondence should be addressed to: Historical Society of the Church of God, P.O. Box 702, Anderson, Indiana 46015. Email should be sent to *Merle D. Strege*, Historical Society President, at: [mdstrege@anderson.edu](mailto:mdstrege@anderson.edu).

*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.

Website:

[www.choghistoricalsociety.org](http://www.choghistoricalsociety.org)



## **WHEN PROFESSORS WEEP**

The appointment to see Dr. Earl Martin had been made a few days earlier and normal school and work involvement kept me from the news media reports. Thus I was unaware that this was the day when Pearl Harbor was bombed.

Professor Martin received me in his usual kind manner however, as we discussed my being drafted as a Conscientious Objector, he broke down and sobbed for what seemed to be quite a while, then he composed himself and recommended that I leave school and take a pastorate. He said I could do more good for God and country pastoring than in a C.O. camp. He also said, "I know after the war you will come back to school." Which I did. His grief was certainly proper and a precursor of the future, for if my memory is correct he lost a son-in-law in the War.

Dr. Adam Miller began the day's lecture and the start of the semester's study of the book of John with his reading of John's preamble, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then he started a re-quote using the term 'Divine Logos' and as he did he began to choke up, took a few moments to get hold of himself and proceed. Truth and reality of scripture and of the nature and being of Christ could not be more clearly af-

firmed than to have a professor break down while reading it.

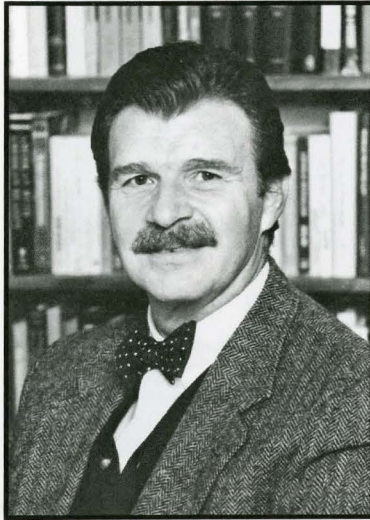
This was impressive to my sophomore mind but it is only in reviewing the incident seven decades later that I celebrate the passionate depths of Dr. Miller, who, without embarrassment, broke down before his class. Having taught a few college classes I might be labeled 'assistant professor' but in no way am close to the quality of professorship of Dr. Martin or Dr. Miller. But I want to share my moment of tears.

It was General Assembly time at Anderson Camp Meeting and President Reardon and the college was under attack. Pastor after pastor came to the microphone and vehemently hurled accusations at the college. And Dr. Reardon kindly, and patiently, addressed all of their concerns, to no avail. This seemed like it would never end—nor would the cat calls from the assembly as Dr. Reardon spoke.

Overlapping the noon hour, the session finally closed. I sought out my good wife and we went to an out-of-the-way restaurant for me to retreat. Waiting for our food to come, I started to describe the previous session to Dorothy only to break into deep sobs that wouldn't seem to stop. I remember saying over and over again, "This is not my Church! This is not my Church!" I kept thinking of the chorus sung so enthusiastically for years and which now sounded empty and full of mockery. "*Beloved, how this perfect love unites us all in Jesus! One heart and soul and mind we prove the union heaven gave us.*"

So professors weep at different times and on different occasions for different reasons. However, their tears identify them so realistically with our Lord about whom the Gospel writer simply said, "Jesus wept."

— Robert J. Hazen



## The Southern Bible Institute

Years after his retirement my Greek professor Fred Shoot and his wife Bernice would walk through the Anderson University campus. Whenever our paths crossed he invariably smiled and asked, "What's new in history?" Fred knew the answer, as do most working historians.

A great deal is new in history because researchers keep discovering information that for one reason or another had escaped the attention of their predecessors. New information requires history to be re-written, as evidenced most recently by the work of Doug Welch and Dale Stultz, *The Gospel Trumpet Years*. In my research into the history of Anderson University I have discovered details concerning the Southern Bible Institute that must be added to and thus amend the account published in the last issue of the *Historian*.

Ministerial training had been much on the minds of General Assembly members when they assigned Anderson Bible School and Seminary responsibility for a school for African-American pastors in the South. The Southern Bible Institute was Anderson's noble but short-lived re-

sponse. It began offering courses in Augusta, Georgia in 1925 under the leadership of alumnus Mack M. Caldwell, Class of '22. On one hand, SBI was an extension program operated by ABSS. The Institute's operations were governed by a managing committee named by ABSS trustees,<sup>1</sup> who included Black ministers on the oversight committee. Furthermore, instruction was subject to the censorship of the ABSS doctrinal committee. On the other hand, the SBI dean had to be ratified by the General Assembly, giving the Institute status in the church's national work.

However, the Southern school was a line item in the ABSS budget, and this was the telling factor. The Institute struggled under severe disadvantages throughout its brief life. On average eight students attended classes during the first year. The budget for 1926-27 was a mere \$4,697, but the Institute operated at a loss of \$2,000. Anderson's trustees frequently discussed "problems" at SBI and in 1927 asked board chairman J. T. Wilson, along with Rowe and Caldwell to meet again with black ministers to discuss prospects for the Institute. However its decline continued through 1928, when expenses were reduced to \$1,126 but receipts totaled only \$96.

Mack Caldwell named poverty, poor education, and even illiteracy as major factors in the Institute's struggle. He also believed that few African-Americans read the *Gospel Trumpet*, the SBI's chief means of communication, and thus were largely unaware even of its existence. Finally, Caldwell contended that low standards for the ministry suggested that education was unimportant. He strongly believed that SBI needed to continue, but serious liabilities overwhelmed it. In 1929 the Institute disappeared from the ABSS budget,<sup>2</sup> and thus ended a noble early effort at Black ministerial education.<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> Along with Caldwell, original committee members included A. T. Rowe, W. H. DeLaine, R. L. Taylor, and J. H. Greene.

<sup>2</sup> Summarized from ABSS trustees minutes, 1925 to 1929, Anderson University Archives

<sup>3</sup> This essay is taken from a draft of a chapter in my forthcoming centennial history of Anderson University and is not to be copied or reproduced in any manner.



*Southern Bible Institute, Decatur, AL  
Mack M. Caldwell, Dean, 1923-25*

## Emma Meyers and the 'Sad Case' of D.O. Teasley

Ecclesiastes is right...there is nothing new under the sun, especially when it comes to organizations myopically focusing on strategies and plans even when confronted with the problems looming in the lives of their leadership. This scenario is not just exclusively relegated to businesses, but it is also prevalent in the church. The Church of God itself has not been immune from such situations. And just like the fall of leadership from places such as Enron, it often starts with a handful of people unwilling for visions and strategies, no matter how noble, to be carried out at the expense of covering over the flaws of leadership that could damage the legacies of the organization for a lifetime.

Such was the case of a few people in 1919 who would not ratify D.O. Teasley as the traveling companion of F.G. Smith on a world mission tour for the Church. A flurry of letters began finding their way to the desk of JW Phelps because of the "buzz at the Niagara Camp Meeting" in March. The letters were written with grave concern over Teasley's traveling the world beginning in June 1919 as a representative of the Church of God because of marital indiscretions he had while pastoring the congregation in Bessemer, Alabama. While many letters may have been lost to the Church's history, several tell the story of how a few people would not allow time, energy, expense, and firm plans to supersede broken lives and doing what was right for the unfolding worldwide missionary work.

The buzz seems to have started as early as December 1918. Between January and March of

1919, JW Phelps and FG Smith took measures to ratify Teasley and finally put to rest the tales of his indiscretions, which took place around 1915. The ratification appears to be that a letter was sent to every registered Church of God pastor in the USA and Canada asking them to affirm Teasley and Smith through a return letter of support. While it was almost unanimous in support, several individuals would only support Smith but not Teasley until a final and full investigation was completed by Church of God leaders. This demand would evoke civil but stern rebukes and obvious frustration from Phelps and in return fuel resolve by a handful of ministers to be heard and treated with respect for their opinions.

GW Pye's letter of February 18 to Phelps opened the volley. Pye fully supported Smith, but wanted a full explanation on how the Church leaders had dealt with the matter of Teasley's "compromising attitude with one or more women."<sup>1</sup> Phelps, responding nearly a month later, said that Teasley had repented and confessed everything to the leadership and the church in Bessemer. Phelps wanted Pye to know in no uncertain terms that the "trip of these two brethren to view the missionary fields of the church, to obtain information, plan for the work in foreign countries, and to adjust matters that need adjustment at our foreign situations, was the most important move that the church has ever undertaken."

Phelps went on to say that "we are on the eve of a greater forward movement in the church, both at home and abroad, than our minds can conceive of." The five page, single spaced letter goes at length to state that Teasley is the man, but turns a corner at the end in tone by subtly using all capitalization for Pye (and any others) to "PROVE"



Teasley is unworthy or themselves to "admit they are wrong or wrongly informed" of this matter.<sup>2</sup>

The one dissenting voice to receive the brunt of criticism, however, was Sister Emma A. Meyers. Emma (Schreiber) Meyers was an evangelist who traveled regularly throughout the Midwest. Meyers came into ministry with the Church of God, on December 13, 1892 in St. Louis, MO. As an evangelist; she was billed to be at meetings in IL, OH, PA, and IN to "expound the Truth." In 1894, she and her husband, Willard, moved to Louisville, KY where they opened a church on Twenty-Fourth and High Street. The church in Louisville would grow over the years to come. By 1950 there were three congregations in the city.

Phelps wrote to Emma Meyers on March 24, 1919 about her dissenting voice to the confirmation of Teasley. His six page letter challenged her, as he had others. He wrote that "three individuals stand out against the voice of the whole ministry [who know the entire matter of Teasley], thus conveying the idea that they are holier and more upright than all the others?" Phelps is civil, but his frustration bursts through with statements showing his ire at the thought that the mission trip would be thwarted; the matter in Bessemer was settled and the church there

“should have kept their mouth shut and never let it go beyond the confines of the congregation.” Phelps concluded that if Emma was mistaken, she should admit it.

The first letter to reveal the hurt and frustration of Meyers was March 28, 1919.<sup>3</sup> Meyers said she wanted to deal with the report that came to her from parties far away, from a Gospel Trumpet person who told Emma “the fight was on.” Emma must have been told she was “doing a lot of talking.” Meyers had responded to Phelps’ original letters to the total ministry and she responded “with honesty and true principal.” She believed her letter was to be held in strict confidence. Meyers states her hurt that he, Phelps (and Smith, too) did not care for her opinions or her personally. Emma said she did not talk to anyone about her opinions of Teasley, not even her own husband, lest she taint his view of D.O.

Meyers wrote a second letter on March 31, 1919 to Phelps that is openly angry that she has been singled out for her opinions and her convictions about Teasley. Emma is angry that she is accused of breaking confidence, and that the brothers (in this matter) have treated her poorly in their circles of influence. Meyers says that Teasley had a number of opportunities to acknowledge to her (and others) his indiscretion.<sup>4</sup> Teasley had two opportunities, according to Emma, at the Assembly meetings to talk with her privately about her lack of confidence in him, but he did not take them. As her letter closes, she stands strongly to her opinions that this whole matter is in God’s hands.

Phelps was also frustrated by these exchanges and did not want anyone in the church to believe that he or the Board wanted to “force him (Teasley) down the throat of the church” as

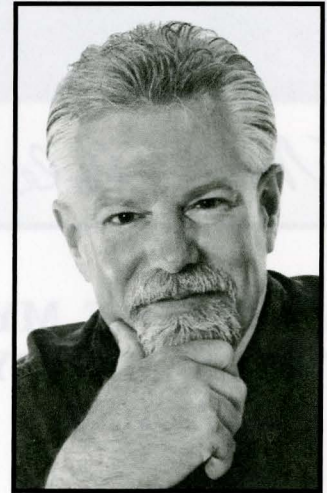
the representative. Phelps acknowledged concern over the “opposition to Teasley and wants to resolve it by meeting in Bessemer with all parties.” But in the meantime, Phelps needed to deal with Meyers, who he confided was giving him “quite a bit of drubbing.” Phelps asked several colleagues (such as Grant, AT Rowe, and EA Reardon) to read her statements and give him their opinions, so he would have “ammunition at once and hence shall appreciate it if you will give me an immediate answer.” A.T. Rowe wanted his response to be confidential, but would “write in a way that (he) would be willing for her to see it if necessity required.” Reardon wrote that Sister Meyers has grounds and good reason to question Teasley, but is not very merciful. Reardon suggested Phelps not get hung up in the fight, but be civil and allow the “Lord to take care of the whole matter.”

While we don’t know the outcome of the conflict with Sister Meyers, we do know that her persistence demanded that Phelps go to Bessemer and personally deal with the allegations against Teasley by several women and other members of the congregation. A telegram on April 22, 1919 from Phelps who was in Bessemer asked that F. G. Smith, Teasley, J.T.Wilson, and a stenographer come on a train immediately as some issues were uncovered that needed attention. That telegram with its request would open a series of events which led to Teasley’s undoing, including his removal as the traveling companion of Smith on the missionary trip, resignation from his post as Manager of the Gospel Trumpet Company, and his leaving the Church of God movement by June 1919.

The history of the Church of God is different today because three people stood for what they

believed was right, even though it was painful. It is sad, however, that one person, Emma Meyers, seems to have taken the brunt of ‘official’ criticism as she tried to bring what was hidden to light. Meyers may have known far more than her letters revealed. But one thing was sure; she loved the Church of God enough to know that her voice had to be heard in order that the importance of the missionary trip and its legacy bless the church for decades to come.

**David L. Neidert**



<sup>1</sup> This statement is how Phelps referred to the matter of Teasley in a letter to A.C. Atkins on March 22, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> This letter from Phelps to Pye would garner a terse response from Pye on March 26, 1919. Pye writes he is “not sure he understand (s) your meaning in all that you have written to me” but Pye’s letter has a coarse tone indicating he was able to read between the lines of Phelps’ correspondence. In a similar later to F.G. Fuerholzer on March 22, 1919, Phelps demands to “KNOW” the “FACTS- - absolute proofs” that Teasley did not fully repent or was involved in more indiscretions. We do not have a response from Fuerholzer.

(Continued on Page 7)



## MARY COLE, MY FIRST SEMINARY TEACHER

Melissa K. Berry

I read the advertisement for *The Gospel Trumpet Years* in the Church of God e-newsletter and noticed that Sister Mary Cole was mentioned as an early leader of the Church of God Reformation Movement. It said that her impact along with Allie Fisher needed to be redefined and their contributions had not been properly recognized. What exciting news! I knew of Mary Cole and her brothers Jeremiah and George Cole. I had read her book!

I immediately called Doug Welch, one of the authors and one of my School of Theology professors, to tell him that I knew of Mary Cole and was very excited to see her contributions

and great faith acknowledged. Doug said that her biography *Trials and Triumphs of Faith* was recently re-discovered; and it, along with other newly discovered documents provided new information about our movement's history.

In spring 1986 I visited my grandparents, Alva Otho and Ruby McGee's house to tell them that I wanted to attend seminary and become a minister. My grandfather asked me to do him a favor and disappeared into his den. He returned with a very old small blue book. Its title was *Trials and Triumphs of Faith* by Mary Cole. Granddad looked me straight in the eyes, handed me the book and said; "Melissa, do me a favor. I want you to go home, read this book by Mary Cole, and then come talk to me". My grandparents had never given me any book but the Bible, so I knew this must be special. Granddad then said; "Melissa, after you read this book, if you think you can go through everything this woman had to go through, if you believe you are up to facing the challenges of being a woman in ministry, and you think you have the faith and strength to work in ministry, then we will support your decision to become a minister."

As I read Sister Cole's story I noted touch points we had in common. She was born in 1857 in Iowa to a farming family, grew up in Civil War Missouri, and primarily lived in the Midwest. I am from a farming background and grew up in Indiana and Iowa. She wrote about her relationship with God as an ongoing conversation when she stated; "God spoke to me". Mary lived with the chronic illness, Epilepsy and relied upon God for health and healing throughout her life. My granddad knew that I faced life with my own chronic condition after a closed-head injury playing flag football my

freshman year at the University of Iowa that left me with life-long deficits before I transferred to Anderson College. Cole's faith inspired me to rely upon God for my needs and direction.

Mary shared her trials and triumphs working as a woman in ministry called to preach. When she was told that the denomination she grew up in would not license women to preach she continued to answer God's call upon her life despite facing dangers like armed angry mobs. She traveled across the country preaching in Moundsville, WV; Hammond, LA; California; Wyoming; the Midwest. She traveled via horse and buggy, forded rivers on horseback through chilling winters and steaming summers. Even her railroad trips were stymied by snow drifts.

When I was young Granddad McGee told me stories of growing up in Mississippi and Louisiana and how the Church of God started with ministers who traveled to preach at Tent Meetings or one room schoolhouses just like Mary Cole and her colleagues. My grandparents were born in 1912 and 1914. They witnessed the growth of the Church of God from its early years and their families helped establish congregations in Mississippi and Bastrop, Louisiana. In 1935 they moved from Bastrop to Anderson. My Grandma Ruby put Verco printing on



the greeting cards at Warner Press. Granddad worked at Delco Remy and built the baptistry at Arrow Heights. They related to Mary Cole's life with their contributions.

Sister Mary Cole's chapter "7 Years of Preparation" for ministry and her numerous travels helped me understand God's call upon me. I started preaching and leading worship with the undergraduate traveling ministry team known as, F.U.T.U.R.E. Mary Cole arrived in Chicago in 1898 and worked with her younger brother George to co-found the Mission Home in 1903. Her reliance upon God for financial and spiritual direction reminded me of the summer break I raised funds to work under Sister Hattie Downer in inner-city Brooklyn. God started preparing me for ministry during my undergraduate years at Anderson. Attending the School of Theology would continue my seven years of preparation.

Mary Cole brought her mother to the Old People's Home in Anderson. Her chapter "Caring for My Aged Mother" reminded me of how I helped care for my older grandparents and later my father before his death. Mary then lived in the Old People's Home with other older workers outliving most of her contemporaries.

I believe that Mary Cole was one of God's walking-talking miracles. She wrote of her spiritual life, her health challenges, preaching across the United States, participation in the Church's growth and development, and working with her brothers Jeremiah and George, D. S. Warner, and many other early leaders. She witnessed the development of the Church of God and its extended family in its early years. Mary told the story of

her life working for God so that other people would be inspired to listen to God's call upon their own lives, and because other people believed it was important that her life of service not be lost in the history of the Church of God. Cole learned a great deal living and traveling extensively with ministers throughout her life. The chapter "Exhortation to Ministers and Workers" gives sage advice to young workers and suggestions for seasoned workers to help mentor young people in their faith and preaching. Her story and the counsel she shared in 1914 remains helpful still today.

My grandparents knew I would undergo many trials and triumphs of faith between my chronic illness and being a woman in ministry and this is why they asked me to read this book. I find Mary Cole's story more helpful today than when Granddad asked me to read it in 1986. Thank you to my grandparents and "Thank you" Mary Cole for being my first seminary teacher.

— Melissa K. Berry

Cole, Mary. *Trials and Triumphs of Faith*. Anderson: Gospel Trumpet Publishing Company, 1914.

(Continued from Page 5)

<sup>3</sup> In the opening statement, she refers to a letter written by Phelps of March 24, 1919. Meyers would not respond to his letter, but stated immediately that she wanted to address the frustration she felt by reading the tone of Phelps' letter.

<sup>4</sup> There is an interesting statement in Meyers' letter at this point. She witnessed the "sad sight" of Teasley in his (?) office at the Gospel Trumpet, but it is unclear what this event actually was about.

## *The Gospel Trumpet Years: 1881-1961*

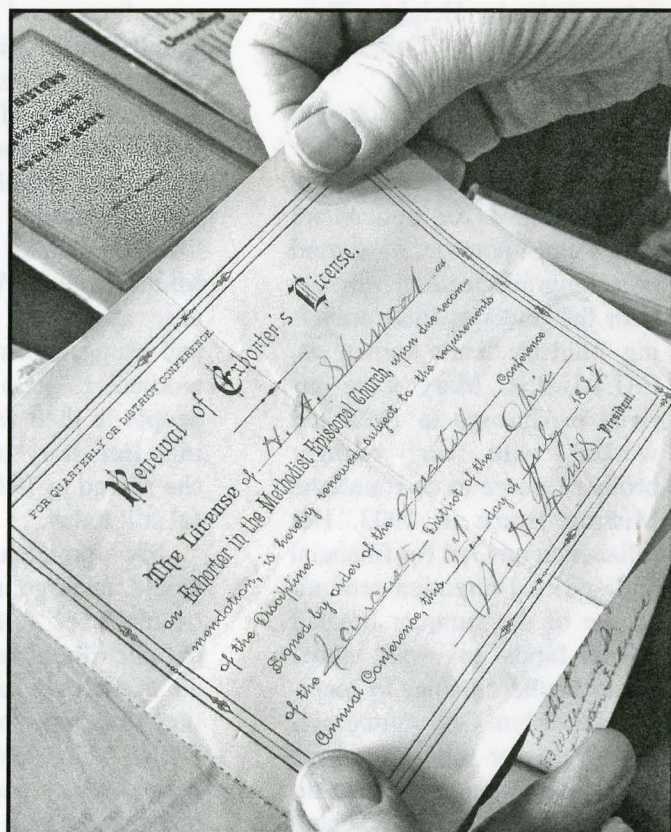
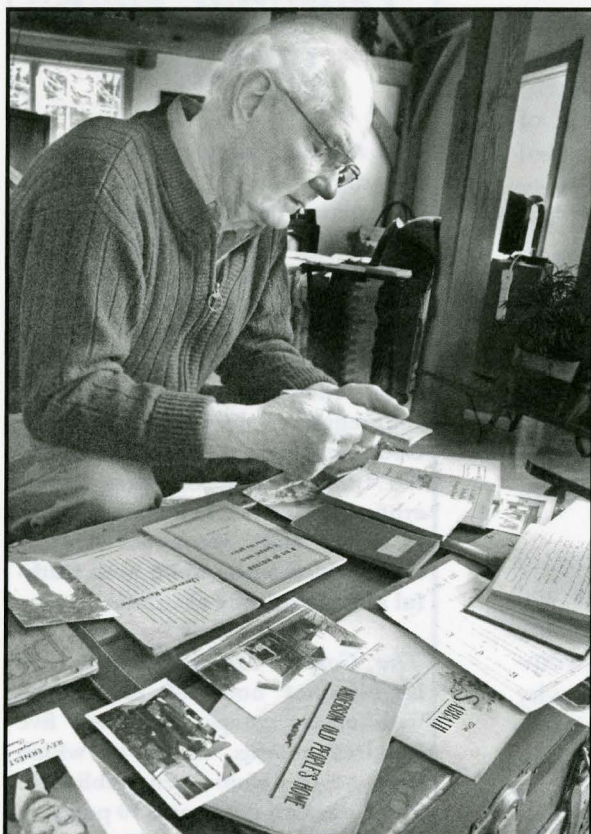
*The Gospel Trumpet Years* traces the origins of 'the church of God reformation movement' to the powerful and widespread holiness reform of the nineteenth century, explores the effects of 'comeoutism,' and follows the Church of God (Anderson) as it becomes a worldwide fellowship of believers and congregations. How the Church of God moved from 'comeoutism' to the 'Church of the Christian Brotherhood Hour' is a fascinating story. It is the story recounted by this book—which seeks to be both truthful and historically accurate.

*The Gospel Trumpet Years* is a large-format book of 268 pages, with charts, maps, and over five hundred photos, many of which have never before been published. It includes an index and 70 pages of appendices for those who wish to explore some of the major issues and questions not dealt with directly in the main body of the book, or mentioned only briefly, but not pursued in detail.

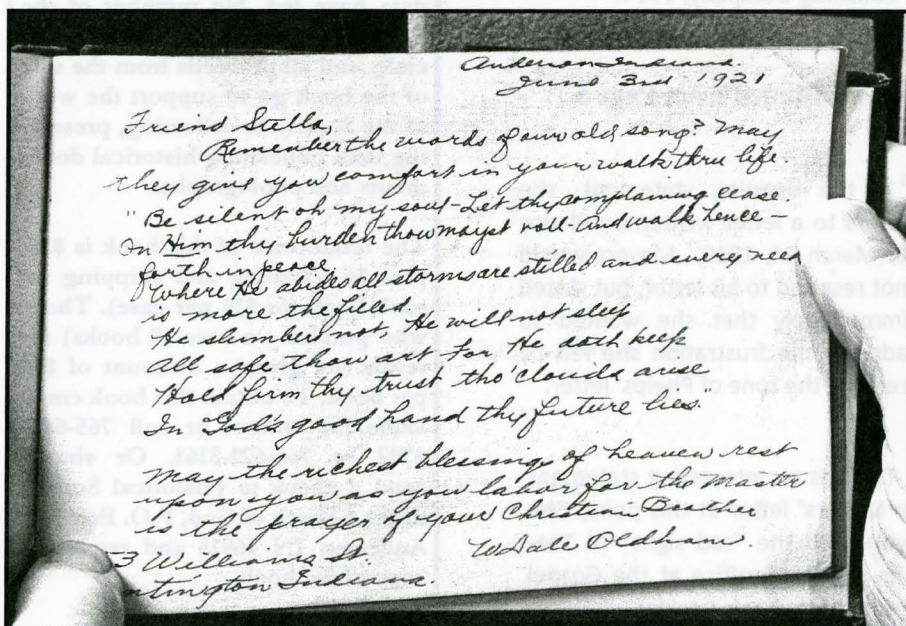
This has been a team effort by volunteers making up the Historical Society. They have felt free to follow the data—no matter where those data have led. No member of the Society benefits in any way financially and all proceeds from the sale of the book go to support the work of the Society in collecting, preserving, and publishing historical documents and photographs.

The retail price of this book is \$35, plus \$6 handling and shipping for each book (or \$16 per case). Those who purchase a case (8 books) for resale are given a discount of \$10 per book. To obtain this book email [sadie1761@att.net](mailto:sadie1761@att.net) or call 765-643-3702 or 765-621-3161. Or simply send a check to Historical Society of the Church of God, P.O. Box 702, Anderson IN 46015 and request a copy of the book.

## And the work of collecting archival material goes on....



The collection shown above (left) was sent to us by Dr. James Bradley, retired seminary professor and Virginia State Coordinator. In retirement, Dr. Bradley is going through the many books and papers he has collected over his years of ministry. Some of the material is familiar (although useful), but some of it is new to us. It is likely that the 'Exhorter's License' issued to H.A. Sherwood by the Methodist Episcopal Church (now the United Methodist Church) in 1897 is seen now for the first time by most of us. This helps strengthen the thesis of *The Gospel Trumpet Years*, in which we have argued that the Methodist Episcopal Church was one of the 'mother Churches' (to use Mary Cole's description of her own origins), if not *the* 'mother Church,' of the Church of God (Anderson).



### Autograph Books

In bygone days, autograph books were all the rage. The 'in' thing was to collect the signatures and best wishes of friends, associates, and acquaintances. We have a number of these books in Church of God Archives—and room for more.

The autograph book page on the left is from a book sent to us by James Bradley. The owner of this book was Stella Frazier and the writer of this particular page, as you can see, was W. Dale Oldham. Stella appears to have been a student at Anderson Bible Training School in 1921.