

A TIMETABLE OF EVENTS IN THE SEPARATE BAPTIST REVIVAL

- 1701 CHURCH OF ENGLAND ESTABLISHED IN N. CAROLINA
- 1707 PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION FOUNDED
- 1751 CHARLESTON, S. CAROLINA ASSOCIATION FOUNDED.
- 1751 THOMAS AND GARRARD BEGAN THEIR MINISTRY IN VA.
- 1753 JERSEY SETTLEMENT BAPTIST CHURCH FOUNDED
- 1754 DANIEL MARSHALL ENDS HIS MISSION TO THE MOHAWKS AND MOVES TO OPECKTON COUNTY, VA.
- 1754 SHUBAL STEARNS AND COMPANY ARRIVE IN OPECKTON COUNTY VIRGINIA.
- 1755 NOVEMBER 22, STEARNS AND HIS PIONEER CHURCH, FOUND SANDY CREEK SEPARATE BAPTIST CHURCH.
- 1756 TIDENCE LANE (AT SANDY CREEK), ELNATHAN DAVIS (AT SANDY CREEK), JAMES READ (AT GRASSY CREEK), AND PHILIP MULKEY (AT SANDY CREEK), CONVERTED.
- 1756 REGULAR BAPTISTS REFUSE TO ASSIST SHUBAL STEARNS IN THE ORDINATION OF DANIEL MARSHALL.
- 1758 HARRISS CONVERTED. BAPTIZED BY MARSHALL
- 1758 JANUARY, FIRST CAMP (ASSOCIATIONAL) MEETING OF THE SEPARATES AT SANDY CREEK
- 1758 SANDY CREEK, NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION FOUNDED, THIRD BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IN AMERICA.
- 1760 FIRST SEPARATE BAPTIST CHURCH FORMED IN VA.
- 1762 DAVID THOMAS (REGULAR BAPTIST) FOUNDS BROAD RUN BAPTIST CHURCH IN VIRGINIA
- 1765 JANUARY, HARRISS PREACHES IN PITTSYLVANIA CON- TROVERSY BETWEEN THE SEPARATES AND REGULARS IN- TENSIFIES.
- 1766 HARRISS AND READ TEAM IN VIRGINIA.
- 1766 CONGAREE CHURCH ESTABLISHED IN S. CAROLINA
- 1767 JOHN WALLER BAPTIZED BY JAMES READ.
- 1767 NOV. UPPER SPOTSYLVANIA BAPTIST CHURCH, FOUNDED.
- 1768 WALLER, CRAIG AND CHILDS IMPRISONED IN FREDER- ICKSBURG, VA.
- 1769 KEHUKEE (REGULAR) BAPTIST ASSOC. OF NORTH CAR-OLINA FORMED.

CHAPTER SEVEN

God's Power out of North Carolina

The hearts of the people being touched by a heavenly flame could no longer relish the dry parish service conducted for the most part as they thought, by a set of graceless mercenaries. Robert B. Semple, on the ministry of Sandy Creek Baptist Church

I make bold to say that these Separate Baptists have proved to be the most remarkable body of Christians America has known.¹

George Washington Paschal

A great revival was about to begin in the south. It was clearly the greatest revival in American history. No one could have foreseen the scope of it. No one could have possibly predicted that it would involve the hated, hunted *Baptists*. Few of the historians of the present generation pay attention to it, and even fewer give it the credit or respect it richly deserves. It involved an obscure New England Congregationalist, awakened under the preaching of George Whitefield, who became a Separate Baptist in Tolland, Connecticut. His name was Shubal Stearns. He is our fourth key man. Before we meet this most important American pioneer, background on the first of the *baptized believers* in the southern provinces is in order.

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A foothold for the *baptized believers* was carved in the south, in **South Carolina**, just before the Great Awakening. It was a small niche started by emigrants from the persecuted Baptist church in Boston, Massachusetts who migrated first to Kittery, Maine and then south. They landed their hopes in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. These brave souls were led by William Screven and began their stand for Christ in 1683. The second Baptist church in South Carolina was Ashley River founded in 1736.

The famous Welsh Neck Baptist church, part of the Philadelphia Association was founded in 1738. They planted a church on the Pee Dee River in South Carolina. A church was planted at Euhaw in 1746. The Pee Dee branch planted a church north, in the Yadkin River valley area in the central part of North Carolina which they called the Jersey Settlement.

All of these were Particular Baptist* in their sentiments. They soon became known as Regular Baptist churches, following closely the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.

Charleston, South Carolina became the base for the second Baptist association in America, appropriately named the Charleston Association, founded in October of 1751. The Charleston Association was in close fellowship with the Philadelphia Association, which as we have noted, was founded in 1707.

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Turning now to the early years of **Virginia**, we find Robert Nordin arriving from England in 1714. He and Thomas White were ordained in London, and sailed together to serve God in Virginia. However, Mr. White died en route. Robert Nordin did arrive and after a sufficient time of labor, gathered a church at Burley, in the county of Isle of Wight.² This was the first Baptist church in Virginia. John Comer also mentions a church in the county of Surry in Virginia, during this same time frame.

Between the years 1743 and 1755, three more Baptist churches were constituted in Virginia: Opeckon (Millcreek), Smith's Creek and Ketoc-ton. All three were General Baptist and came from Maryland.

Preacher Nordin died in 1725 and Richard Jones came from England to be the pastor of the church. He was still there when the Separate Baptists began preaching in Virginia in 1755.³

In 1751, the Philadelphia Association appointed David Thomas and John Garrard missionaries to Virginia. Thomas had been tutored at the Hopewell Academy, the institution that eventually became Brown Col-

* That is, they believed in particular or limited atonement. Their ties were with the Philadelphia Association.

lege. In those days, Hopewell was in New Jersey and the chief instructor was Isaac Eaton. Thomas⁴ was ordained at age eighteen and entered the ministry in Virginia in 1751.

David Thomas preaching in Virginia was met with jeers and persecution, but the Lord blessed with great numbers turning to Christ. Through him, the first few churches in northern Virginia were established. Thomas became a legendary figure, his testimony being that of a battered saint standing against the religious bigotry of the Episcopalian *standing order*. He founded the Broad Run Baptist church in 1762.

John Garrard⁵ came to Virginia in 1754 and founded the Mill Creek Baptist church in Opeckton County. He quickly succeeded in planting the Ketchikan Baptist church as well.

Garrard and Thomas became co-laborers in evangelism as Regular Baptist ministers when the Separate Baptist revival began. Verily, they became somewhat dazed in the whirlwind of Separate Baptist zeal.

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We now turn our attention to the earliest years of **Baptist churches in North Carolina.**

The first Baptist Church in North Carolina was gathered in 1727 in Chowan County about 10 miles north of Edenton.⁶ It was gathered by the General Baptist evangelist Paul Palmer.⁷

The General Baptists of North Carolina had a great ministry in North Carolina. They began under the leadership and work of Paul Palmer. These General Baptist churches⁸ in North Carolina were formed between 1727 and 1755: Chowan (1727), Pasquotank (Shiloh) (1736), Kehukee (1742), Tar River Falls (1744), Fishing Creek (1745), Lower Fishing Creek (1748) Tar River (1749), Great Cohara (1749), Redbanks, Tosneot (1756), Bear Creek (1756), and Swifts-Creek.

Despite this great beginning, the General Baptists of North Carolina were made nearly extinct by the ministry of Benjamin Miller and P. P. Van Horn who toured North Carolina between 1755 and 1756. Miller and Van Horn were sent as agents by the Philadelphia Association to correct the errors of the General Baptists. In that one-year span the Philadelphia duo reconstituted the majority of the General Baptist churches into Particular Baptist churches, until only three General

Baptist churches remained.⁹ After that, as in other places in the colonies, the Particular Baptists began to refer to themselves as Regular.¹⁰

Thus the General Baptist churches in North Carolina were transformed. Nearly all the above named churches were reconstituted as Particular (Regular) Baptist. There was now a third wave coming.

To sum up the pioneering efforts of the Baptists of the south to the year 1755, we find: four churches in South Carolina and the Charleston Association; six churches in Virginia and no Baptist associations; and twelve churches in North Carolina with no associations. There were no Baptist churches in Georgia. In just 20 years, all of that would drastically change.

George Whitefield himself lamented the absence of ministers in the province of North Carolina and expressed a desire that God would send forth a John the Baptist to preach and baptize in the wilderness.¹¹ Such was the state of religion in the south before Shubal Stearns, providentially prepared by the Holy Spirit, arrived at his place in American history.



North Carolina had a population of approximately 100,000 souls in 1755. Most had emigrated from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New England.¹²

The Quakers came to Cane Creek in central North Carolina in the mid 1750s. The Moravians settled on the Yadkin River near present day Winston-Salem on a 100,000-acre tract of land they named Wachovia. To the south and east of them, Gaelic speaking Scots and Irish Presbyterians settled in small groups. Central North Carolina, was at that time, filling with English speaking frontiersmen from the Mid-Atlantic States and New England.

In 1755, three forest paths traversed the province of North Carolina. The Settlers Road, also known as the Great Wagon Road, ran from north to south all the way from Pennsylvania to South Carolina. Sec-

ondly, what eventually became known as the Boone Trail, ran west from Wilmington to the Yadkin settlements. Thirdly, the Trading Path, came from southeastern Virginia (Norfolk) to the Waxhaw country.

Those three trails converged on a little notch in the wilderness of North Carolina by the waters of Sandy Creek. That spot, which is nearly remote today, was in the days of the Separate Baptist revival a national crossroads between north and south.

Just to the west of that crossroad, Tidence Lane had migrated to the Yadkin River area of North Carolina. Sometime before 1755, he left his parents and his brother Dutton in southern Virginia in Pittsylvania county. Tidence was homesteading, trying to carve out a living with his wife Esther by farming, hunting and fishing.

News had traveled to the central west settlements about an extraordinary preacher who was demolishing the sins of the backcountry and seeing the settlers converted at an astonishing rate. There was a groundswell of opposition to the preacher already for he was a Baptist and had taken to immersing his converts in Sandy Creek. Some of the men of the backcountry and piedmont areas of North Carolina, with their Church of England heritage, began to swear oaths to *never* become a Baptist.¹³

Still, Tidence had a desire to hear this preacher, for even with the criticisms of his loud voice and gestures, he believed seeing Mr. Stearns might be interesting at least. So he rode out, having no idea of how life would change for his entire family. Tidence Lane later testified:

When the fame of Mr. Stearns preaching had reached the Atkin, (Yadkin River) where I lived, I felt a curiosity to go and hear him. Upon my arrival I saw a venerable old man sitting under a peach-tree with a book in his hand and the people gathering about him. He fixed his eyes upon me immediately, which made me feel in such a manner as I have never felt before. I turned to quit the place but could not proceed far. I walked about, sometimes catching his eyes as I walked. My uneasiness increased and it became intolerable. I went up to him thinking that a salutation and shaking hands would relieve me: but it happened otherwise. I began to think that he had an evil eye and ought to be shunned; but shunning him I could no more effect than a bird can shun a rattlesnake when it fixes its eyes upon it. When he be-

gan to preach my perturbations increased so that nature could no longer support them and I sunk to the ground.¹⁴

History is buried at Sandy Creek, beneath endless winters, summer heat, and the leaves of two centuries of autumn. We thank our Heavenly Father that such history can be resurrected, for there on those sleepy hillsides the settlers witnessed quite possibly, the greatest outpouring of the Holy Ghost on a group of believers since the day of Pentecost.

Shubal Stearns was a New Englander, born in Boston, Massachusetts, January 28, 1706. His father was Shubael, as he spelled it, and his mother was Rebecca Larriford. Shubal Stearns, the son, like so many other New England men, was caught in the Holy freight train of the Great Awakening. Both he and his future brother-in-law and fabulous assistant in revival Daniel Marshall, were converted during Mr. Whitefield's 1745 tour of Connecticut.¹⁵ He and his wife, parents, sisters and brothers were immersed by Wait Palmer in Stonington, Connecticut in March of 1751. He was ordained on March 20, 1751 by Wait Palmer and Joshua Morse. In 1755 the Lord began to move upon this group of Connecticut Baptists.

Stearns married Sarah Johnson, of whom very little is known. She served with him faithfully over the mountains and through the wilderness. While they had no children, the number of spiritual children birthed from their ministry would grow to an uncountable sum.

Throughout his life Shubal Stearns' driving force was a sure calling of God. Robert B. Semple described Stearns' call to preach the gospel to the southern and western provinces:

Mr. Stearns and most of the Separates had strong faith in the immediate teachings of the spirit. They believed that to those who sought him earnestly, God often gave evident tokens of his will. Mr. Stearns, listening to some of these instructions of Heaven, conceived himself called upon by the Almighty to move far to the westward, to execute a great and extensive work.¹⁶

Constrained by that call, Shubal and Sarah Stearns, with his parents Shubael and Rebecca Stearns; his brothers, Peter Stearns and Ebenezer Stearns and their wives; Joseph Breed and wife; Enis Stimson and wife;

and Jonathan Polk and wife began the journey south. They first landed in northern Virginia. Semple relating:

Stearns first went to Opeckton, Berkley Co. Va. where he met with the church under the care of John Garrard. He met with his brother-in-law, Daniel Marshall, in that place. Marshall united with Stearns from there, forming a team that would rival the apostle Paul and Barnabas. Shubal Stearns provided the leadership and organizational skills, Daniel Marshall became the tireless labourer.¹⁷

At Opeckton, Stearns united with his brother-law-law, Daniel Marshall.

This introduces the testimony of the meticulous Daniel Marshall, who, without apology, ought to be remembered as one of the greatest missionaries of the 18th century. Marshall was born in Windsor, Connecticut in 1706. He no doubt received infant sprinkling in the same church with Jonathan Edwards as they were both from Windsor and nearly the same age. He served as a deacon in the First Congregational church of Windsor for 20 years. He had a son named Daniel from his first wife, Hannah.

Mr. Marshall was 38 years of age in 1745 when he heard George Whitefield preach the gospel.¹⁸ This began a reinvestigation of his priorities and an examination of the doctrines of the Saybrook Platform so accepted in Connecticut. During the next three years, Mr. Marshall came to reject the half-way covenant and infant baptism and embrace *experimental religion* and believer s baptism.

Evidence shows that Mr. Marshall offended the church at Windsor by preaching the Baptist doctrines.¹⁹ This would indicate that by 1748 Marshall was leaning towards the Separate Baptists, albeit, not yet baptized. Evidently, Daniel Marshall s entire family was affected by his preaching. Eunice, sister of Daniel Marshall was jailed for exhorting and preaching.²⁰ In any event, what followed was Marshall s unofficial banishment and excommunication.

The attitude of the established church at Windsor was evident. Marshall s wife Hannah grew ill and died. The church, which he had served faithfully for over 20 years, completely forsook him during his

grief.²¹ About 1748 Daniel Marshall married Martha Stearns, sister of Shubal Stearns.

A Baptist meeting-house was built in 1750 in Windsor.²² It is significant that it stood near the Marshall home.

After his marriage to Martha, and believing that the end of time was near, Marshall migrated up the Susquehanna River into Pennsylvania. Perhaps with the ministry of David Brainard in mind, they went to the Mohawks and endeavored to bring them to Christ.

But the intrigue and suffering of the French and Indian War caused Daniel and Martha to move south to Opeckon, Virginia to what is present day Winchester. There they united with Martha's brother, Shubal.²³ Daniel and Martha Marshall finally received believer's baptism by the hand of Samuel Heaton at the Mill Creek church in 1754.²⁴ Mr. Heaton could not have imagined what this 45-year-old convert was going to accomplish with the rest of his life. At that time also, Joseph and Pricilla Breed were baptized.

The evidences of the Spirit of God in mighty power attended the Separate Baptists in Opeckon and a revival ensued. With the revival, accusations of the disorderly way it was being conducted spread.²⁵

This apparently worried the orderly folk at the Philadelphia Association who sent an informant,²⁶ Benjamin Miller. But instead of being critical of Shubal Stearns and Daniel and Martha Marshall, Miller was impressed and genuinely moved by the meetings. In fact, Miller highly valued Daniel Marshall and his wife and said he would take gold for them.²⁷

On June 13, 1755, while laboring in northern Virginia, a still restless Shubal Stearns received a letter from some friends in North Carolina. It proved to be his Macedonian call:²⁸

The work of God was great, in preaching to an ignorant people, who had little or no preaching for an hundred miles, and no established meeting. But now the people were so eager to hear, that they would come forty miles each way, when they could have opportunity to hear a sermon.²⁹

This report³⁰ burned in the heart of Shubal Stearns.

Leaving Opeckton in the summer of 1755, the group of sixteen believers, now with Daniel Marshall and his family included, journeyed southwest down the Shenandoah Valley. They crossed east across the Blue Ridge into North Carolina where they found their permanent home at the crossroads by Sandy Creek. William Lumpkin in *Baptist Inroads in the South*, wrote the choosing of Sandy Creek may have been providential. This statement by Lumpkin may have been the undisputed understatement of all time.³¹

The Separate Baptist pilgrims built a meeting-house immediately and began to hold church services. A little village sprang up around them as they built pioneer cabins, hunted, and broke up the ground to farm.* They formed themselves into an independent Baptist church on November 22, 1755, with Shubal Stearns as their pastor or elder, as they termed it. Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed were identified as exhorters or assistants. As we consider the leading that Stearns had and the vision that God laid upon his heart, it is not difficult to see his need for those exhorters or assistants. Indeed, God would send more than these.

They were Separate Baptists, but preferred to be called New Lights.³² They shamelessly wanted to associate themselves with the work of the Great Awakening, and as Robert B. Semple wrote, into them was none admitted, who did not profess vital religion. However as was always the case with the *baptized believers* the nickname given them by their enemies stuck to them: *Separate Baptists*.

Shubal Stearns had no formal degree, but had a brilliant mind and was greatly gifted in organizational skills. He was highly intelligent and a planner, planter, and tireless worker. After yielding to his heavenly vision, (see Acts 26:19) he prepared his work and made it fit for the field (see Proverbs 24:27). He envisioned a work force to quickly plant a large number of churches. There can be no doubt God had revealed to Him a great plan for the work that needed to be done. In the history of God's believing people, God always laid the need of the hour at the feet of those who were willing. He then enabled them to meet the need. Would to God, He would raise up the willing to meet the desperate needs of

* Sandy Creek was originally in Orange County, which became Randolph County, which became Guilford County.

our present dreadful hour! Of Shubal Stearns, Isaac Backus wrote, his soul was red with zeal to carry light into these dark parts.³³

The most noteworthy gift in the life of Shubal Stearns was his **voice**. Described by several eyewitnesses to his ministry as enchantment, Shubal Stearns used his voice to bring men to an earnest examination of themselves before God. Morgan Edwards described it:

His voice was musical and strong, which he managed in such a manner as to make soft impressions on the heart, and fetch tears in the eyes in a mechanical way; and anon, to shake the very nerves and throw the animal system into tumults and perturbations. All the Separate ministers copy after him in tones of voice and action of body; and some few exceed him. His character was indisputably good, both as a man, a Christian and a preacher.³⁴

Indeed, the preachers who surrendered to the call of God under the ministry of Shubal Stearns, took on similar characteristics. Semple again, describing the Separate Baptists:

But the manner of preaching was, if possible, much more novel than their doctrines. The Separates in New England had acquired a very warm and pathetic address, accompanied by strong gestures and a singular tone of voice. Being often deeply affected themselves while preaching, correspondent affections were felt by their pious hearers, which were frequently expressed by tears, trembling, shouts and acclamations.³⁵

The scene described above is nothing less than the roots of the OLD TIME RELIGION, so identified with Bible believing Baptists. The description we have of Stearns' voice and preaching habits bring to mind the admonitions to Ezekiel to strike the thigh, and stamp the foot and lift up your voice like a trumpet. George Whitefield no doubt influenced his pathos, and his earnestness and fearlessness were telltale evidences of Whitefield's influence. If George Whitefield was the American Elijah, then Shubal Stearns was his Appalachian *Elisha*, following in his footsteps, wearing his mantle and affecting the lives of thousands. We believe that about Stearns and more, for he could also

be rightly called the Apostle Paul of the Backcountry. He and his followers took up the banner of *experimental religion*.³⁶ Semple wrote:

The doctrine of Mr. Stearns and his party was consequently quite strange. To be born again, appeared as absurd as it did to the Jewish doctor, when he asked, if he must enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born again. Having always supposed that religion consisted in nothing more than the practice of its outward duties, they could not comprehend how it should be necessary to feel conviction and conversion.³⁷

In this aspect, Stearns resembled Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield and most significantly, John Clarke in his insistence on *experimental religion*. But the results of his ministry were all Holy Ghost phenomena. The Holy Ghost was doing something that a mere man could neither start nor finish. We hope our generation will desire to unlock the secrets of the success of this meteoric leader. What we discover about him ought to inflame our hearts and stir our minds to more consecrated service.

Stearns certainly stirred the attention of that generation of pioneers. Arguably, he became the most influential man of the emerging culture of the south. What we recognize as the manners, morals and style of Southern living began in the Sandy Creek Separate Baptist revival, and when we think of the Bible-belt we should in reality think of it as the Separate Baptist belt. David L. Cummins wrote of this view:

The often used term Bible Belt was coined by H. L. Mencken in the 1920s to describe areas of the nation dominated by belief in the literal authenticity of the Bible and accompanying puritanical mores. He did not give the term a specific location, but he did associate it with rural areas of the Midwest and, especially, the Baptist back-waters of the South. He used the term in derision. When one reads of the exploits of the Separate or New Light Baptists and realizes that their field of service was indeed in what might be described as the Baptist back-waters of the South, even Mr. Mencken would have to concur that the Bible Belt was actually the Separate Baptist Belt. Any honest historian would then have to admit that the Great Awakening was not a figment of imagination or the invention of a fanciful annalist.³⁸

Stearns and his preachers took to the fields and towns. For them, religion was real, hell was real, Jesus was real, and you needed to be born again. Shubal Stearns and the band of preachers that followed him were a different stripe from which colonial Americans were accustomed. They were loud in their preaching and urgent in their prayers. They were deliberate in their diction. Even their appearance was different. Gone were the clerical robes, braided hair and powdered wigs. Their hair was cut short,³⁹ of all things, and they did not give the air of aristocracy. It was like Whitefield without the wig; Whitefield without the Anglican chains; Whitefield without infant baptism. It was just what the American frontier needed.

Not long after the conversion of Tidence Lane, by the banks of the Slow River in the central western part of the North Carolina colony, a young woodsman named Elnathan Davis, an emigrant from Maryland, heard that the New England preacher Shubal Stearns, was coming into the area. Stearns was to baptize the giant John Steward. Since the preacher was widely known as but a little man, Davis figured the baptism to be a sure calamity and worth the ride to the site for sheer entertainment. What he did not expect was the overwhelming presence of God when he came to view the spectacle. Morgan Edwards wrote:

He had heard that one John Steward, being a very big man, and Shubal Stearns of small stature, he concluded there would be some diversion if not drowning; therefore he gathered about 8 or 10 of his companions in wickedness and went to the spot. Shubal Stearns came and began to preach; Elnathan went to hear him while his companions stood at a distance. He was no sooner among the crowd but he perceived some of the people tremble as if in a fit of the ague; he felt and examined them in order to find if it was not a dissimulation; meanwhile one man, leaned on his shoulder, weeping bitterly; Elnathan, perceiving had wet his new white coat, pushed him off, and ran to his companions who were sitting on a log, at a distance; when he came one said, Well, Elnathan, what do you think now of these d_____ people?

He replied, There is a trembling and crying spirit among them; but whether it be the spirit of God or the devil I know not; if it be the devil, the devil go with them; for I will never more venture my self among them. He did not keep his promise long, however.

He stood a while in that resolution; but the enchantment of Shubal Stearns voice drew him to the crowd once more. He had not been long there before the trembling seized him also; he attempted to withdraw; but his strength and his understanding confounded, he, with many others, sunk to the ground. When he came to himself he found nothing in him but dread and anxiety, bordering on horror. He continued in this situation some days, and then found relief by faith in Christ. Immediately he began to preach conversion work, raw as he was, and scanty as his knowledge must have been.⁴⁰

Shubal Stearns baptized Elnathan Davis⁴¹ in May of 1764.

The Lord added to the church daily quite literally, and more men surrendered to God s call to preach the Gospel. As the Separate Baptist ministry of Stearns and Marshall worked north a meeting was conducted at Grassy Creek, North Carolina. James Read was saved at the visit of David Marshall to Grassy Creek in 1756. Shubal Stearns baptized him.⁴² A church was established there within the first year with James Read pastoring. Read was an unusual man, who was gifted to preach, but illiterate. Immediately after his salvation and call, his wife began to tutor him to read so that he might study the word of God. He became a great student, pastor, and evangelist.

God added more laborers to the church at Sandy Creek. Sometime in 1756, John Newton joined with the group of Separate Baptists. Newton was born in Kent County, Pennsylvania on August 7, 1732, and was baptized by Isaac Potts in Southampton County, Virginia. After answering the call to preach, he was ordained pastor of the Black River Baptist church in Duplin County, North Carolina March 7, 1757. From his charge at Black River, John Newton preached the Gospel over the Virginia border in Halifax County, Virginia. His most illustrious convert was Phillip Mulkey. Morgan Edwards recorded this testimony from Mulkey:

One night as I was going home from the house where I had been playing the fiddle to dancers, a hideous specter presented itself before me just as I opened the door; the effect was, fainting, and continuing as

dead for the space of about 10 minutes, as the people about me report the matter; when I recovered, I found an uncommon dread on my spirits, from an apprehension that the shocking figure, I had seen was the Devil and that he would have me. I mounted my horse and went homewards. My fears had so disordered my understanding that I fancied the first tree I came to bowed its head to strike at me, which made me start from it. Happening to look up, I fancied that the stars cast a frowning and malignant aspect upon me. When I came home I went to bed and endeavored to conceal the matter from my wife; but I could not be, for thenceforth I could neither eat, nor sleep nor rest for some days; but continued to roar out, I am damned! I shall soon be in hell!

Meanwhile a benighted stranger (this was John Newton) came to my house to read a chapter (53rd of Isaiah) and prayed; and thereby turned my thoughts to Christ and salvation by him, for the first time. The novelty of this matter, and the possibility it introduced, that my sins had been laid on Christ and that God had stricken and smitten Christ for them affected me in such a manner as exceeds description. I found an inclination to adore the stranger, and to question whether he was an angel or man? The next day he departed, and as he was going this thought came in my mind, There is Lot going out of Sodom! As soon as he disappears fire will come down and burn me and mine!⁴³

Mulkey was converted and joined the ranks of preachers out of Sandy Creek.

Shubal Stearns baptized William and Joseph Murphy in 1757. Joseph Murphy, being possessed of a strong mind, ready wit, and a heart for God; became a very useful and much respected preacher throughout an extensive circle of churches. William took the Gospel all the way across the mighty Mississippi.

Abbott s Creek

A group of infant churches began to gather from the converts. The first Separate Baptist church plant in North Carolina from Sandy Creek was 30 miles due west at Abbott s Creek. James Younger was an unordained Baptist preacher who emigrated from the Welsh neck church in Pennsylvania and settled at Abbot s Creek. Younger heard about Sandy

Creek Baptist Church and went to Shubal Stearns to request a preacher to come and establish a church at their settlement.⁴⁴ He fetched Daniel Marshall to preach for them. A little further west from there was the Jersey Settlement church. It may be wondered why Younger s group did not unite with Jersey,⁴⁵ but be that as it may, Daniel Marshall helped gather them with tremendous energy and success. An independent Baptist church now needed to be constituted.

This newly constituted church needed an ordained pastor. Daniel Marshall was the logical choice, but was not ordained. Shubal Stearns desired another ordained preacher to aid him in the ordination, but none could be found. Benjamin Miller, who had great affection for the Marshalls, left the Yadkin area in January of 1756. None other could be found. So Elder Stearns and Brother Marshall ventured down the Yadkin River to the Pee Dee Church in South Carolina to ask Pastor Joshua Edwards for assistance in the ordination. Joshua Edwards was a Regular Baptist and had heard of the irregular way in which the Separate Baptists conducted themselves. Therefore, he refused to assist due to the "noise and confusion" in the Separate Baptist church services.⁴⁶ Finally, the friendly Henry Ledbetter, pastor of the Baptist Church at Lynch s River, South Carolina, agreed to assist in the ordination of Daniel Marshall. He may have been friendly because he also was brother-in-law to Daniel Marshall. Some modern historians doubt this, but the author tends to doubt the modern historians.⁴⁷ The refusal to ordain Marshall by the Regular Baptists fueled animosity between the two groups that would last 30 years. Finally, the Abbott s Creek church had a pastor. *

Grassy Creek

Grassy Creek was the next church plant.

In 1756 Daniel Marshal left Abbott s Creek to preach meetings in Grassy Creek, just south of the Virginia-North Carolina border. James

* Sandy Creek Baptist church observed nine ordinances: baptism, the Lord s supper, the love feast, laying on of hands, the washing of feet, anointing of the sick, the right hand of fellowship, the kiss of charity, and devoting children. Abbott s Creek embraced this scheme. The keeping of the ordinances varied with every new church they constituted.

Read was converted there. Read was later baptized by Shubal Stearns and eventually became the pastor of the second church plant out of Sandy Creek: Grassy Creek. From this strategic location, James Read was responsible for much work for God northward into Virginia.

Sandy Creek Baptist Church now established a pattern. According to Robert Devin, the author of *the History of the Grassy Creek Baptist Church*, Sandy Creek would birth a church in this manner: Members would journey to a needy area and sit as a church under the preaching of a man of God.⁴⁸ They would sit * to encourage the work, bring people, and win converts. Then a preacher would be ordained and another work begun. This work went on continuously with several missions occurring simultaneously.⁴⁹

Deep River

Deep River Baptist church was constituted in 1757. It was the third church plant from Sandy Creek. Its location was probably at the "Falls of Lockville" in Chatham County, east of Sandy Creek.⁵⁰ In October of 1757, Philip Mulkey was ordained to pastor the Deep River church, becoming the third ordained preacher of the Separate Baptist order.

In 1760, Deep River broke into two churches. Phillip Mulkey took the majority of the church to Fairforest in South Carolina and Joseph Murphy took the remaining part of Deep River Church to the Yadkin River. Murphy constituted the Little River Church there. By 1763 Little River had grown to over 500 members. Joseph Murphy left in 1769 to begin a church at Shallow Fords on the west side of the Yadkin, not far from the Movavian settlements.

From Deep River two new preachers, Nathaniel Powell and James Turner, went to the North Carolina-South Carolina border and formed the Lockwood's Folly Baptist Church.⁵¹ Lockwood's Folly church came from a group of fishermen who emigrated from Cape May, New Jersey and settled close to the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

* This would not necessarily be the same sitters at the same infant church every week.

Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall began to travel extensively. By the end of the first year, (1755-1756) Stearns and Marshall turned their attention east and preached the Gospel all the way to the North Carolina seaboard. During the first eastern North Carolinian seaboard campaign, their enemies began to refer to them as the Enthusiastical Sect.

They seemed to be omnipresent in North Carolina. They were in Jones, Johnston, Onslow, Duplin, New Hanover and Brunswick counties. Their Anglican opponents thought they were Methodists, an accusation that George Whitefield categorically denied.⁵² It was Stearns himself, the Apostle Paul of the Backcountry, with his Barnabas, Daniel Marshall, whom Governor Dobbs and the Right Reverend Mr. Reed called strolling preachers from New England.⁵³

By the end of 1756, the established Church of England (Anglican/Episcopalian) in North Carolina had grown quite nervous about the strollers. Even though the General Baptists had been in the state since 1727 and the Regular Baptist takeover had occurred from 1751 to 1755, no protests were made against the Baptists until Stearns, Marshall, and their converts began to preach far and wide with power.

Somewhere along the trail God raised up Ezekiel Hunter. G. W. Paschal wrote, of Elder Ezekiel Hunter there is little other record.⁵⁴ Yet from such records that we have we conclude that Hunter was an extraordinary man. Ezekial Hunter is an illustration of the innumerable company of God s servants of whom we know so little. He canvassed Duplin, Sampson, New Hanover, and Carteret and brought them to Jesus, with little fanfare of his exploits.⁵⁵ Yet, we know the results of his preaching and pastoring put the Anglican Church in jeopardy in Onslow County. Indeed, the Anglican minister, Alexander Stewart said that Onslow was the seat of enthusiasm in this Province.⁵⁶

The records show that almost *the whole population of Onslow County became Baptist*. The Right Reverend Ebenezer Stewart of Bath, was aghast about this turn of events and wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in London, begging for reinforcements to stop the bleeding from the mass conversion of the Church of England into Ezekial Hunter s New River Baptist church.

McCauley said, The churchmen (Anglican/Episcopalian) made war on schism (the Baptists) with so much vigor that they had little leisure to make war on vice.⁵⁷ Within four years, the situation with the Church of England had grown so grave that one of their parsons complained, Last winter, (1760-61), says Reverend Alexander Stewart of Bath, I went as far southerly as New River into Onslow County, the present seat of Enthusiasm in this Province; where having preached twice, *the few remaining Episcopalians there were very thankful to me.* He also called for more missionaries to Onslow to counteract the work of the Enthusiasts.⁵⁸ Ezekiel Hunter died in 1773.⁵⁹

Not only were churchmen coming to Christ during the 1755-1756 revival, but also imminent Catholics and Quakers. John Dillahunty, a refugee from Maryland married a Quaker wife, Hannah Neal. Being excommunicated by both religious bodies, they came to their pioneer home in the New Bern, North Carolina vicinity sometime around 1755. Dillahunty was the sheriff there and when Whitefield preached along the North Carolina coast in February of 1755, Dillahunty grew concerned about his soul. He was ready when the Apostle Paul of the Backcountry and his helper Daniel Marshall came to New Bern the following year. Hannah was converted and then John. They were baptized by Philip Mulkey and became a part of the Trent River Church.⁶⁰

The years 1755-1757 proved to be banner years for the Separate Baptist revival. Just as great was 1758. One example of God's power was made manifest in the younger brother of Tidence Lane, Dutton. Morgan Edwards wrote of Dutton's summertime conversion of 1758:

As he was returning from hunting with the game and his rifle in his hands he fancied that he saw the devil, standing in the way before him; upon which he stopped, meditating on what to do; to go on (he thought) was daring; and to fly, cowardly; firing at him, he judged, would be in vain; therefore he turned on one side and took another path; when he came between him and home he fancied the devil was pursuing him, but dared not to look back; he quickened his pace, till he came near the house; then bolted the door, and fell down with rifle and game and all, on the floor. After continuing in this situation for a

while he came to himself, but never got rid of the fear till he was plucked as a brand out of the burning.⁶¹

Dutton Lane like others before him, began to preach immediately. He became a part of a team that saw the conversion of the most influential of all their fellow preachers. In 1758 Daniel Marshall, William and Joseph Murphy, and Dutton Lane traveled to Virginia. They gathered a crowd near Allen s Creek, on the road from Booker s Ferry on the Staunton River to Pittsylvania Court house. In this meeting, a strapping Virginian militia commander was next to join the Separate Baptist tidal wave and destined to lead it to its finest hour in Virginia. Samuel Harriss conversion was recorded by the Virginia historian James B. Taylor:

It is said that when engaged in the army, in the discharge of his official duties, he providentially found an opportunity of hearing the gospel by Joseph and William Murphy, who had appointed a meeting at a house near Allen s Creek, on the road leading from Booker s Ferry, on Staunton, to Pittsylvania Court-house. As the people were collecting, Colonel Harriss rode up, splendidly attired in his military habit. What is to be done here, gentlemen?, said Harriss. Preaching, Colonel. Who is to preach? The Murphy boys, sir. I believe I will stop and hear them. He dismounted.

The house was small, and in one corner stood a loom, behind which the colonel seated himself. The Lord s eye was upon him, and the truth became effectual in deepening his convictions. Such was his agony of mind that at the close of the meeting his sword and other parts of his regimentals were found scattered around him.⁶² His conversion was brought to pass in an unusual manner; it began with a deep seriousness without his knowing why or wherefore; conversation and reading, directed his attention to the cause; pressed with this conviction he ventured to attend the ministry of the Baptists; his distress increased; and his heart was ready to burst. Once as the people rose from prayer, the Colonel was observed to continue on his knees, with his head and his hands hanging down the other side of the bench; some of the people went to his relief, and found he was senseless as in a fit; when he came to himself he smiled, and brake out in an ecstasy of joy, crying, Glory! Glory! Glory! etc ⁶³

Some time after this, Daniel Marshall baptized him.

Harriss began preaching the gospel immediately. His preaching quickly brought John Weatherford under distress of soul. Soon Weatherford was converted, and about the year 1761, he also began to preach the Gospel. He was one of the first evangelists to assist in setting the Virginia hills on fire for God. Weatherford was to providentially leave his own testimony in *crimson red* as we shall discover in chapter ten.

* * *

Shubal Stearns vision of a great and extensive work in the western parts was coming to fruition. In just 18 months, God had wrought a great work. Semple wrote:

In process of time some of the natives became converts, and bowed obedience to the Redeemer's scepter. These, uniting their labors with the chosen band, a powerful and extensive work broke out. From 16, Sandy Creek Church soon swelled to 606 members; so mightily grew the work of God!⁶⁴

By the end of 1758, three fully constituted churches were in existence from the Sandy Creek church with over 900 members, with the following branches and their pastors:⁶⁵ Little River, Montgomery County Joseph Breed; Grassy Creek, Grandville County James Read; Southwest, Lenoir County Charles Markland; Black River, Duplin County John Newton; New River, Onslow County Ezekial Hunter; Lockwood's Folly, Brunswick County Nathaniel Powell, James Turner.

There was something else in the vision of Shubal Stearns that was born in 1758 the association *camp meeting*. As we shall detail in chapter eight of our narrative, Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall stirred the hearts of the wilderness to attend a meeting of the Separate Baptists. The purpose of the meeting was nothing less than a full throttled awakening. The attendants were instructed to come and camp. Indeed it was actually called a *camp meeting*.⁶⁶ Many historians mistakenly credit the Presbyterians and James McGready with the invention of the camp meeting during the Great Revival of the West in 1800, but the record

clearly points 42 years earlier to the Apostle Paul of the Backcountry and his army of converts.

Lockwood s Folly

A little company of Baptists formed at Cape May at what became known as Lockwoods Folly. They began in 1712. They connected with the Philadelphia Association and were called "poor families of fisherman" by the Anglican Mr. MacDowell. Somehow they came into fellowship with Stearns and Marshall and began to call themselves "New Light Baptists."⁶⁷

In 1762 Ezekial Hunter went to Lockwood s Folly to baptize and made the church a branch of his New River congregation. He later preached extensively in Bladen County at White Swamp and Brunswick County at Livingston Creek in 1765. Ezekial Hunter pastored both New River and Lockwood s folly until 1773 when James Turner became pastor but Turner died soon after. Lockwood's Folly was the last of the list of Separate Baptist Churches mentioned by Morgan Edwards and Robert Semple.

Hunter s New River Baptist Church established the Southwest Baptist Church under Charles Markland in October of 1760. Markland joined the revolution at the outbreak of the War and the church all but disappeared when he marched off to offer his life for our liberty. What remained of Southwest Church merged with the Baptist church at Trent, North Carolina after the revolution.⁶⁸

* * *

Here are the churches started during the years 1755 and 1771 in the Separate Baptist revival:

These churches were started in **NORTH CAROLINA**

- 1- Sandy Creek: 1755, Shubal Stearns
- 2- Abbott s Creek: 1756, Daniel Marshall
- 3- Grassy Creek : 1756, James Read
- 4- Deep River: 1757 Joseph Murphy, Phillip Mulkey

5- New River: 1758, Ezekiel Hunter

6- Little River: 1759, Joseph Murphy

Little River grew to 500 members in 3 years.

Little River had four branch churches in ten years: Little River 2, Rocky River, Jones Creek, Mountain Creek.

The eastern N.C. churches: Great Cohara, Hillsboro, New Bern 1757-1761

8-Black River: 1760, John Newton

10- Trent: 1761, James McDaniel

11- Southwest: 1762, Charles Markland

12-Haw River: 1764, Elnathan Davis

Haw River from 1765 to 1772 grew to five branches in 7 years:

Deep River 2, Rocky River 2, Tick Creek, Collins mount, Caraway Creek.

Lockwood s Folly: 1772 Nathaniel Powell, James Turner, Ezekial Hunter

Shallow Fords: 1768, Joseph Murphy

These churches were started in **SOUTH CAROLINA**

9-Fairforest: 1760, Philip Mulkey

Congaree: 1766, Joseph Rees

Stephens Creek: 1766, Daniel Marshall

These churches were started in **VIRGINIA**

7- Dan River: 1759, Dutton Lane

1765 the thrust into Va. begins

Upper Spotsylvania Church: 1767, Lewis Craig

Staughton River (Blackwater): 1768, William Murphy

Lower Spotsylvania: 1769, John Waller, Jeremiah Walker

Fall Creek: 1769, Samuel Harriss

Goochland: 1771, William Webber

In the present chapter of our narrative the great commission has been vividly illustrated. May we be courageously inflamed to do the same.



Into Virginia the Separate Baptist revival spread. Immediately, in 1759, an Anglican minister in Lunenburg warned: In Halifax, one Samuel Harriss, formerly Burgess for that County, and one William Murphy have raised and propagated a most shocking delusion, which threatens the entire subversion of true religion in these parts, unless the principle persons concerned in that delusion are apprehended or otherwise restrained.⁶⁹

In August of 1760, Daniel Marshall formed a church at Dan River, Virginia River after the baptism of 42 converts. This was the first Separate Baptist Church in Virginia.⁷⁰ Dutton Lane became the pastor.

In January of 1765, Allen Wyley, a baptized convert of the Regular Baptist pioneer preacher David Thomas, became curious to hear a Separate Baptist preach the word of God. He journeyed to Pittsylvania to seek such a preacher and providentially landed in a meeting held by the incomparable Samuel Harriss. Harriss had been preaching throughout Virginia for five years with a long list of converts which included John Weatherford, Anderson Moffett, and Lewis and Elijah Craig. At this point in his ministry, Harriss was being compared to George Whitefield. His preaching ability was aimed straight for the heart. Semple tells us "perhaps even Whitefield did not surpass him in this." Some described him, when exhorting at great meetings, as pouring forth streams of celestial lightning from his eyes, which, whithersoever he turned his face, would strike down hundreds at once.⁷¹ Allen Wyley led Harriss back to Culpeper where he preached in his home. The first meeting went well, but the next day an angry crowd met them with whips. Captain Ball and his gang came and said, You shall not preach here.

A Virginia convert, Jeremiah Minor, replied, But we shall.

The parish parson had stirred the Anglicans against the Baptist converts. The Baptists, being a rough bunch and having a converted Virginia colonel as their spiritual leader, saw the opportunity to knock some spiritual sense into the Episcopalians and a riot broke out. Harriss escaped the brawl and headed to Orange County and stayed that night in the home of Elijah Craig. Lewis Craig was left to guard the door. Ball's gang came and broke down the door. Pandemonium and confusion ended the day and Harriss preached the following day in a barn owned by Elijah Craig.

This introduces us to the Craig brothers, Lewis, Elijah and Joseph. All three became Separate Baptist preachers and all faced persecution. The most influential in the author's opinion was Lewis. John Taylor wrote of him:

Mr. Craig became awakened, perhaps as early as 1765, by the preaching of Col. Samuel Harriss. Mr. Craig's great pressure of guilt induced him to follow the preachers from one meeting to another, and when preaching ended, he would rise up in tears, and loudly exclaim that he was a justly condemned sinner, and with a loud voice warn the people to fly from the wrath to come, and except they were born again, with himself they should all go to hell together; while under his exhortation, the people would weep and cry aloud for mercy. In this manner, his ministry began before himself had hope of conversion, and after relief came to him, he went on preaching a considerable time before he was baptized, no administrator being near, many being converted under his labours. When he was baptized, a church was constituted at once, in Spotsylvania, Virginia, and Mr. Craig soon ordained as their pastor.⁷²

* * *

Back in North Carolina, James Read was restless. He ate little and slept less. Tossing and turning upon his bed he was heard to cry in his sleep, "Oh Virginia, Virginia, Virginia!" God would soon call him there.

In 1766 Samuel Harriss headed into Orange County with Allen Wyley. Scores were brought to Christ. His converts gathered together under the Regular Baptist David Thomas. But Thomas unwisely began to criticize the Separate Baptists. Thomas' preaching was much more

subdued and laced with the Augustinian/Calvinistic tendencies of the reformed. The converts of Orange County began to call for Colonel Harriss to baptize them. But he was unable to baptize them for he was not yet ordained. So Harriss rode with Elijah Craig and two other young preachers sixty miles into North Carolina to fulfill the dreams of James Read.

Read was one of only three ordained Separate Baptists in the south and was preparing to travel to Virginia in response to his vivid dreams when Harriss came looking for him. In the months and years to come they saturated the state of Virginia with the Gospel.

The two returned immediately to Orange County, Virginia and encountered a large crowd waiting for them near the homestead of Elijah Craig. They preached with great power. In the crowd were the Regular Baptist preachers David Thomas and John Garrard. In the ensuing days, Read, Thomas and Garrard worked on a plan to unite for a great campaign together in those parts. It was a grand plan, one that no doubt would have resulted in the salvation of many. However, the people, remembering the criticisms of David Thomas, literally called for Harriss and Read over Thomas and Garrard.

The revival in Orange County continued with huge crowds listening with rapt attention to Samuel Harriss and James Read and a small remnant attending the services of David Thomas and John Garrard. All of it was an embarrassment to Thomas and Garrard and the rift between the Regular and Separate Baptists, which had begun when the Regular Baptists refused to ordain Daniel Marshall, now widened.

From Orange, Colonel Harriss and James Read pressed into Caroline, Hanover and Goochland counties. The Holy Ghost confirmed their labour with converts.

From 1766 to 1770, Harriss and Read visited the area between the James and the Rappahannock with tremendous blessing. On one occasion, 75 adults were baptized in a sparsely populated area. On another occasion 200 adults were immersed. As Semple wrote:

It was not uncommon at their great meetings for many hundreds of men to camp on the ground, in order to be present the next day. The night meetings, thro' the great work of God, continued very late; the ministers would scarcely have an opportunity to sleep; sometimes the

floor would be covered with persons, struck down under conviction for sin.⁷³

So powerful were these meetings that men would travel over 100 miles on horseback to attend.

Sometime in 1767, Lewis Craig was arrested for keeping unlawful conventicles and worshipping God contrary to the laws of the land. The jury withdrew with the intention of giving perhaps another hearing and retired for refreshment which Craig himself provided. While the men were enjoying the drinks,⁷⁴ Lewis Craig said, Gentlemen, I thank you, for your attention to me, when I was about this court yard, in all kind of vanity, folly and vice, you took no notice of me; but when I have forsaken all those vices, and warn men to forsake and repent of their sins, you bring me to the bar as a transgressor, how is all this?⁷⁵

Back in the courtroom, Craig finished his defense by saying, I forgive my persecuting enemies, and shall take joyfully the spoiling of my goods.⁷⁶

On the jury at Craig's hearing was John Waller. This was Swearing Jack Waller, given the name to distinguish him from the crowd of other Wallers in that part of the country. Swearing Jack was a notorious sinner, a mocker, a gambler and a profane person. He was a leader of lost men who was referred to as the devil's adjutant. But God was doing that remarkable thing of conviction in his heart and at the testimony of Lewis Craig, Swearing Jack Waller felt the calling of a loving God to a lost sinner. Soon after, he was converted and baptized by James Read.⁷⁷

* * *

With the Baptist revival burning bright, the Anglican/Episcopal *standing order* of Virginia moved violently against it. At the first appearance of the Separate Baptists no attempt was made to throttle them, but when the advancement of souls became an avalanche, the religious establishment had to move to crush it.

In the words of Robert Semple:

There was an established religion: the Nebuchadnezzars of the age, required all men to bow down to their golden image: these Hebrew

children refused, and were cast into the burning fiery furnace of persecution: the Son of God walked with them there, to the utter dismay of their enemies. The decree finally went forth, that none should be any more forced, to worship the golden image.⁷⁸

The Episcopalian battle plan to silence the Separate Baptist revival was largely executed by enforcing the Virginia statute prohibiting "disturbing of the peace. Armed with this weapon, on June 4, 1768, the sheriff of Spotsylvania County apprehended James Childs and Lewis Craig. They also rounded up John Waller for preaching in the home of Henry Goodloe.⁷⁹ Waller had already reached a kind of legendary status.

When the trio was brought before the court, the accusation against them became a famous saying in Virginia as the court was informed:

May it please your worships, these men are great disturbers of the peace, for they cannot meet a man upon the road, but they must ram a text of scripture down his throat.⁸⁰

It reminds the author of present day Laodocian Christians who express contempt for believers who make it a habit to canvass door to door with the gospel or hand out tracts on a regular basis. Indeed, the accusation against Childs, Craig and Waller serves to convict the spiritually dead churches of today.

In court, John Waller defended them. They were fined and commanded to cease preaching in Spotsylvania for a year plus one day. With this they refused to comply. So they were escorted to the gaol, chained and paraded through the streets, no doubt with the intention to embarrass them. However, the intention backfired as the three prisoners sang as they walked,

Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveler.

Deny thyself and take thy cross,
Is the Redeemer s great command;

Nature must count her gold but dross
If she would gain this heavenly land.

The fearful soul that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
Is but esteemed almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure.

Lord, let not all my hopes be vain,
Create my heart entirely new,
Which hypocrites could ne'er attain
Which false apostates never knew.

The early summer air caught their enchanting serenade and a crowd gathered and began to express their outrage. Lewis Craig's little brother, Joseph was in the crowd. Joseph, overwhelmed with the procession shouted out: Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment! With that, some in the audience fainted.⁸¹ The revival was fanned with the persecution.

Unfortunately for Virginia⁸² persecution was repeated often from 1768 right up until the Revolutionary War. The imprisonment of Baptist preachers would spring Patrick Henry into the public fray over liberty and bring Thomas Jefferson to believe the Baptist ideal of soul liberty.

Around the 4th of July in 1768 and after spending four weeks in the Fredericksburg jail, Lewis Craig was released and went to Williamsburg to attempt to secure a release for the others. The deputy-governor of Virginia, John Blair, sent this letter to the attorney for the King of England concerning Craig and his Baptist companions:

SIR, I lately received a letter, signed by a good number of worthy gentlemen, who are not here, complaining of the Baptists; the particulars of their misbehaviour are not told any further than their running into private houses and making dissensions. I am told, they administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, near the manner we do, and, differ in nothing from our church, but in that of Baptism, and their renewing the ancient discipline; by which, they have reformed some sinners, and brought them to be truly penitent. If this be their behaviour, it were to be wished, we had some of it among us. John Blair. July 16, 1768.⁸³

Waller and the others continued in jail 43 days. While in prison, they constantly preached through the grates. The mob without used every exertion to prevent the people from hearing, but to little purpose. Many heard indeed, upon whom the word was in power and demonstration.⁸⁴

After their release, the trio pursued the lost in Spotsylvania with abandon. Semple says, "Day and night, and indeed almost every day and night, they held meetings in their own and the adjacent neighborhoods. The spread of the gospel, and of Baptist principles, was equal to all their exertions; insomuch, that in very few sections of Virginia, did the Baptist cause appear more formidable to its enemies, and more consoling to its friends, than in Spotsylvania."⁸⁵

On December 2, 1769, the Lower Spotsylvania Church was constituted. On December 4, 1769, Blue Run Baptist Church was founded and Elijah Craig ordained pastor. In November 1770, Lewis Craig was ordained pastor of the Upper Spotsylvania Baptist Church. This church would later accomplish one of the greatest acts of faith in the history of Christianity.

Semple informs us that Samuel Harriss strongly influenced Lewis and Elijah Craig, John Waller, James Childs and John Burrus. They were "anointed by an ardent desire for the advancement of the masters kingdom."⁸⁶

Goochland was the next to be affected. John Waller baptized William Webber and Joseph Anthony. Joseph Anthony and Reuben Ford saw revival while preaching together throughout Virginia.

Then the revival came to Amelia County. William Mullin was converted when he heard the gospel in 1769. He came to Middlesex and brought his brother John and brother-in-law James Greenwood to a saving knowledge of Christ. In November of 1770, the revival visited Middlesex under the preaching of John Waller and John Burrus. Here "Swearing Jack" left his innocent blood *crimson red* in the soil of Virginia as a magistrate attempted to pull him off a stage from which he was preaching. Someone threw a rock and hit a bystander barely missing Waller's head.⁸⁷

James Greenwood began to preach. A great number believed and awaited the constitution of a church and scriptural baptism.⁸⁸

In the meantime, the Holy Spirit was bringing about more work south of the James River. The "Murphy boys" William and Joseph, part of the first group of preachers called directly under the ministry of Shubal Stearns, were teaming with the nearly omnipresent Samuel Harriss. They were preaching to serious crowds in the Richmond area.

Robert Stockton was among those whom God called into the ministry at that time. The counties of Halifax, Charlotte, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg heard the gospel from Samuel Harriss, James Read, Jeremiah Walker, John Williams, John King, James Shelburne and Henry Lester.⁸⁹ From their labours, the Nottoway Baptist Church was formed with Jeremiah Walker as pastor. From this sprang the Middle District Association.

* * *

In December of 1770, William Webber and Joseph Anthony passed over the James River and into the land of Chesterfield, Virginia and turned the population to madness with their preaching.⁹⁰ Within a few weeks they were put into prison and remained until March of 1771. Semple relates:

While in prison, they did much execution, by preaching through the grates; many people attended their ministry, and many professed faith, by virtue of the labors of these, the Lord's persecuted servants. This was the beginning of God's work in the county of Chesterfield; no county ever extended its opposition and persecution to the Baptists farther than this, and yet, in few counties, have Baptist principles prevailed more extensively, than in Chesterfield.⁹¹

After the success in Chesterfield, William Webber joined forces with John Waller and in August of 1771, they turned their attention to Middlesex. Webber narrowly escaped being clubbed to death when a sympathizer grabbed the sheriff's stick as he was drawing back to strike.

William Webber, John Waller, James Greenwood and Robert Ware were then imprisoned.

The ground at Middlesex caught the *crimson red* blood of the innocents also as Thomas Waford was severely injured while receiving a whipping. On August 10, 1771, Waford was released and the next day being Sunday, brought the *baptized believers* and other interested persons to the prison courtyard to hear the imprisoned preachers:

Many of their friends came to see them, and were admitted into the prison; James Greenwood preached to them. They gave notice that they would preach every Wednesday and Sunday; many came to hear them, insomuch, that their enemies began to be enraged, and would frequently beat a drum, while they were preaching.⁹²

They had their day in court with the Virginia version of the *black hats* once again sternly ordering them not to preach in Middlesex County. Once again they refused to cooperate and were sentenced to an indeterminate time of prison. Semple wrote: "The persecutors found that the imprisonment of the preachers, tended rather to the furtherance of the gospel. The preaching seemed to have double weight when coming from the jail; many viewed it with superstitious reverence."⁹³

Anger at the Separate Baptists was widespread, as Semple observed:

The rage of the persecutors had in no wise abated; they seemed, sometimes, to strive to treat the Baptists and their worship with as much rudeness and indecency as was possible. They often insulted the preacher in time of service, and would ride into the water, and make sport, when they administered Baptism; they frequently fabricated and spread, the most groundless reports, which were injurious to the characters of the Baptists.⁹⁴

* * *

Into South Carolina the Separate Baptist revival spread. Deep River, North Carolina broke up in 1760 and most followed Phillip Mulkey to Little River in South Carolina. In 1762, it removed to Fairforest, South Carolina. In that location, they became a great church planting work. In

1765, John Newton immigrated to South Carolina. According to the historian G. W. Paschal, Newton was ordained twice⁹⁵ in 1757 and 1768. The second time was at Congaree Baptist church in South Carolina along with Joseph Reese by the Regular Baptists Oliver Hart and Evan Pugh. That ordination led to some problems at Sandy Creek.



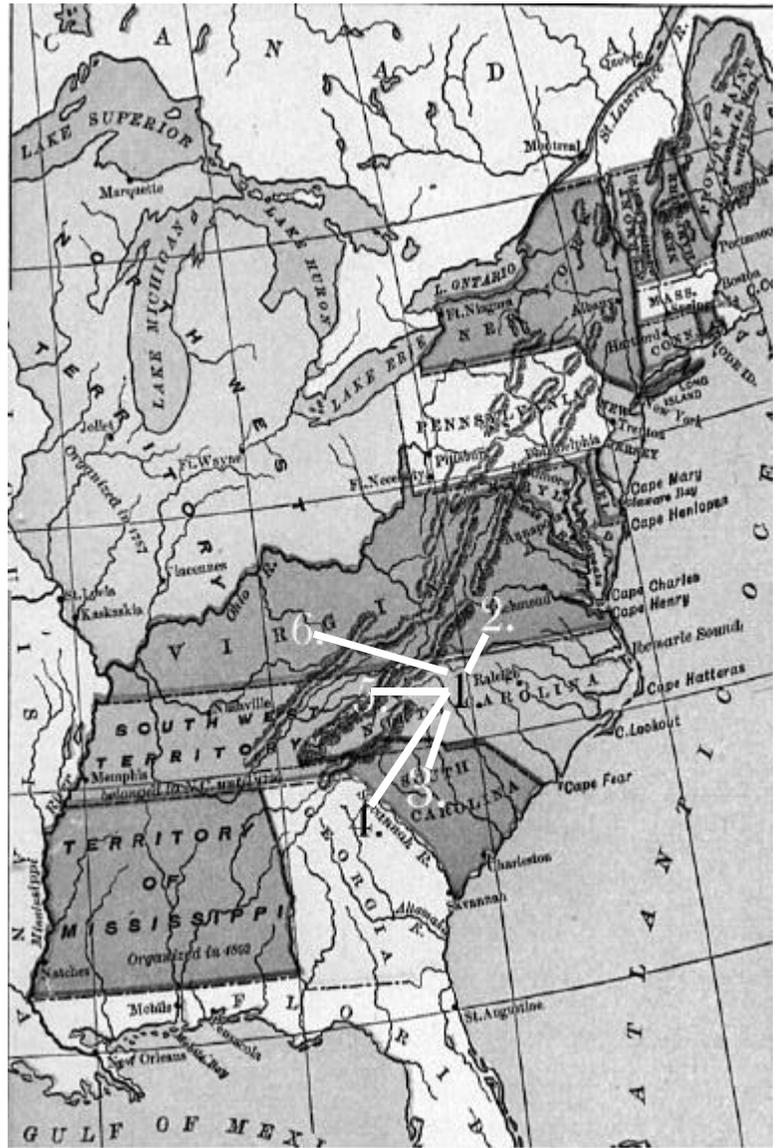
After ten years of nearly constant preaching, Shubal Stearns was enjoying some of the fruit of his labor. Despite the fact that Stearns ministry was so effective, we do not have a single publication of anything he preached. We have no journal, no notes, and no thoughts of his as he experienced this great outpouring of God's power. Every historian of that era testified of his gifts and the overwhelming wave of revival that emerged from his church and the association he founded. Yet, we only have a handful of witnesses that bothered to record any details of this important juncture in American and Baptist history. The author will offer his weak effort of explanation of this puzzling peculiarity in the pages that follow. It is our opinion that schools, towns, counties and institutions be named for Stearns. Yet he remains in obscurity, and the reasons for his obscurity are as deeply mysterious as any enigma of history. The reliable William Cathcart, Baptist historian of the late nineteenth century gave this opinion:

Few men ever enjoyed more of the Spirit's presence in the closet and in preaching the Gospel. Had he been a Romish priest, with as flattering a record of service to the church of the popes, long since he would have been canonized, and declared the Patron Saint of North Carolina. . . and stately churches would have been dedicated to the holy and blessed St. Shubal Stearns, the apostle of North Carolina and the adjacent states.⁹⁶

There was not a place in North Carolina where Stearns had not preached; there was hardly a hamlet in which he did not see some token

evidence of the Holy Spirit at work. This beauty would somehow be turned into ashes in just a short period of time. Just before those heart-wrenching events would become a reality, Stearns wrote to Isaac Backus:

The Lord carries on His work gloriously, in sundry places in this province, and in Virginia, and in South Carolina. Not long since, I attended a meeting on Hoy River, about thirty miles from hence. About seven hundred souls attended the meeting, which held six days. We received twenty-four persons by a satisfactory declaration of grace, and eighteen of them were baptized. **The power of God was wonderful.**⁹⁷



The advance of the Separate Baptists:

1. Sandy Creek, N.C.
2. Dan River, Va.
3. Fairforest, S. C.
4. Kiokee, Ga.
5. Buffalo Ridge, Tn.
6. Gilbert s Creek, Ky.