The Associate Reformed Presbyterians in Lamar County, Texas

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The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, although it had become by
the 1950's larger and more active than at any time in its history, has not
been represented in Texas since 1908 when its Texas Presbytery was trans­ferred to the United Presbyterian Church. For at least thirty-four years
prior to that transfer, however, the denomination was active in Lamar Coun­ty, Texas. This sketch of the highlights of that activity draws information
from The Centennial History and The Sesquicentennial History of the de­nomination; from “The Presbyterians in Northeast Texas to 1920” by Mar­shall Vanderburg; from minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Re­formed Presbyterian Church, and of the General Assembly of the United
Presbyterian Church; from The History of Lamar County by A. W. Neville;
and from personal recollections by Mr. and Mrs. M. T. Lee, and Mrs. Sam
Fall, Mrs. A. L. McCaslan and others. The assistance of Miss Janie White­sides in collecting some of the data has been invaluable.

I—Westward Movement to Texas

As the westward tide of migration brought settlers from Southern
states into Texas from the 1820's onward, it included many members of the
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The movement of people from
the older states of the South was accelerated following the Civil War, be­cause of a variety of reasons. The one-crop cotton economy of the times,
and the absence in general of modern soil conservation practices, had worn
out the farms in some areas. Growing population and diminishing opportu­nities caused many ambitious younger men to look for greener fields.

The war had ruined the houses and plantations of many families. Harsh
methods of the Reconstruction led thousands of persons to seek Western
homes where they hoped to find more freedom. The panic of 1873 intensified
the post-war depression in the South, and provided an additional impetus to
migration.

To these people, Texas looked like a solution to their problems. Rich,
virgin soil could be bought in Lamar County, in an unimproved state, for
from $3 to $8 an acre, it was proclaimed in a Texas and Pacific Railroad
brochure printed in 1881. Improved land in the same county was available
at from $8 to $25 an acre. Taxes were described as being very low. Pic­tures in the advertising pamphlet showed a new brick courthouse in Paris,
the Lamar County seat; a fine school building at Honey Grove, a short
distance west; and the Presbyterians' Austin College in the same region of
the state. Such attractions must have had strong appeal to Associate Re­formed Presbyterians in the states east of the Mississippi River.

Although the Associate Reformed Presbyterians came in total numbers
which were relatively large, especially from the Carolinas, their arrival
was by small groups which were widely scattered. In Texas, they were dis-
persed over the state from the coastal plains to the Red River which
separated Texas from Indian Territory. Often they settled in numbers too
small to form a congregation. Ministers sent out by the denomination's
General Synod or by its Board of Home Missions traveled about Texas,
preaching in communities where they found members settled.\(^5\)

II—The Lamar Church at Roxton

In 1874, it is recorded in *The Centennial History*, one such small, un-
organized group in Lamar County was visited by one of the General
Synod's home missionaries, the Rev. James Little Young, Jr. Mr. Young,
a native of Due West, South Carolina, made his home, during his Texas
travels, with the Rev. T. J. Bonner, a pioneer Associate Reformed Pres-
byterian Missionary who lived in Freestone County, Texas. Mr. Young travel-
ed by pony, ranging from near the Gulf of Mexico to Indian Territory,
preaching in schoolhouses, in homes or wherever he could. His later life
was to be devoted largely to the pastorate of the Monticello, Arkansas,
A.R.P. Church.\(^6\)

In 1880, a group of Associate Reformed Presbyterians in Lamar County
—presumably the same ones visited six years earlier by the Rev. Mr.
Young—reformed themselves into a congregation known simply as the
Lamar Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. This little group, located
at Roxton, in the southwest part of the county, elected as their elders
Thomas Ware and W. B. Ware, both of whom had come there from Stark-
ville, Mississippi.\(^7\)

The Wares, in fact, made up most of the membership of the little church,
for the General Synod's minutes of its meeting in September, 1880, re-
ported that the Lamar Church comprised three families totaling seven in-
dividuals. They paid for ministerial support during the year a total of $12.
It took a great deal of faith and optimism to report, in those same min-
utes, that the Lamar Church "seems to be a very hopeful field."\(^8\) The Rev.
Horace Rabb, who had grown up attending the historic Old Brick Church
in Fairfield County, South Carolina, must have preached to them, for
Lamar County is known to have been among the areas to which he traveled
and ministered as a home missionary from the spring of 1880 to the fall
of 1881. Possibly he was present to direct the organization of the Lamar
Church in 1880. Mr. Rabb in later years served his longest pastorate at
the Richland A.R.P. Church of Tennessee, and he was one of the organizers
of what is now the Tucker, Georgia, A.R.P. Church.\(^8\)

Regular supply for the pulpit of the little Lamar Church never ceased to
be a problem, however, during the congregation's brief existence of five
or six years. The General Synod's minutes in 1881 show that the Rev.
Robert Emmette Patterson of Lavelady, Texas, found time that year to
visit and minister to the people of the Lamar Church at Roxton. The time
he could spare for what was in those days an extremely long trip must
have been short. He was, at the same time, serving A.R.P. churches in
Lavelady, Hardin and Prairie Valley.\(^9\) Mr. Patterson, a native of Burke
East Texas Historical Journal

County, Georgia, was a relative of the Rev. William Little who had gone to Navarro County, Texas, in 1874 as the General Synod's first officially appointed home missionary to this state. He himself—Robert E. Patterson—had been doing missionary work in Texas since 1878, living in Lovelady where in 1879 he organized a church of which he was installed as pastor in 1884. He continued to make long missionary journeys of 300 and 400 miles to visit small groups of Associate Reformed Presbyterians such as those in Lamar County.

The General Synod of 1881 heard a request from Lamar Church that the Rev. William Hemphill Millen "be sent to them for a brief time." Mr. Millen, originally from Chester County, South Carolina, and an A.R.P. missionary in Texas from 1880 to 1883, had married a sister of the Rev. Horace Rabb who visited the church at Roxton in 1880 or 1881, or possibly in both years. There is no record, however, to indicate whether Mr. Millen was sent to preach at the Lamar Church in accordance with the request made to the General Synod. The Synod of 1881 did, however, place Dr. Daniel Washington Reid on the Lamar field by adopting a report of the Committee on Domestic Missions which recommended "that Rev. D. W. Reid, if he can see his way clear in the matter, be hereby appointed to the Texas Presbytery, with special attention to the Lamar field."

Dr. Reid, who had been living at Kerrville, Tennessee, apparently "saw his way clear," for Marshall Vanderburg's account of Northeast Texas Presbyterianism says Dr Reid "visited" Associate Reformed Presbyterians in Lamar County in 1882. General Synod minutes of 1882 reveal that Dr. Reid was paid from home mission funds for service on sixteen Sabbaths, in the amount of $128 salary and $40 travel expenses.

This discovery of the records of Dr. Reid's services in Lamar County helps to some extent in clearing up what has been, to the denomination's official historians, the mystery of what happened to one of the Church's most unusual ministers in his later years. Born in Newberry District, South Carolina, Dr. Reid practiced medicine eighteen years before he entered the ministry. The Centennial History has no information on his activities after 1878 when he completed eight years as pastor at Richland, Tennessee. Nor does The Sesquicentennial History, which says, "Of other pastorates and preaching points we do not have record. But he was living in 1903, when The Centennial History was written. This seems to leave approximately 25 years, possibly more, when he was probably serving somewhere, but we have been unable to learn the history of those years."

The record of Dr. Reid's ministry in 1882 in Lamar County helps fill this gap to the extent that it is known he was active as a home missionary four years after leaving the Richland pastorate. This was a temporary thing for the Lamar Church, however. The 1882 minutes of the General Synod list, as being assigned to the Lamar Church, the Rev. R. E. Patterson who was still making long missionary trips to care for small churches. In 1884, the supply minister for the Lamar Church is listed in the Synod's minutes as being another Patterson—the Rev. E. E. Patterson—who was
to be, later, a major figure in the denominations development elsewhere in Lamar County."

The little Lamar Church never had as many as a score of members. Founded in 1880 with three families and seven members, by 1881 it had added one family and four members for a total of eleven. It recorded five baptisms that year. Promising a ministerial salary of $40, it paid only $16, with an additional $3.50 to the Synod’s fund and $2.80 for foreign missions.¹¹

During 1882 the Lamar Church reached its high point. That year, when both the Rev. R. E. Patterson and Dr. Reid filled the pulpit, they reported seven accessions, bringing the membership to six families totaling eighteen individuals.¹² There was a reason for this upsurge, and for a subsequent decline which was just as rapid. That reason was a new migration of Associate reformed Presbyterians from the East which, as we shall see, resulted in formation elsewhere in Lamar County of the only permanent church of the denomination in the county.

The General Synod in 1884 did not receive a statistical report from the Roxton Church. The 1885 report reveals a shrinkage to three families, with a total of eight members.²² The minutes of the General Synod in 1886 carried a Texas Presbytery report which said the Lamar Church had been “disorganized,” this action being taken “with a view of making a new organization in a different locality.”²³ The Roxton Church had not built its own house of worship and hence it would have had little to move, however, “the new organization in a different locality,” so far as is known, never took place.

III—Migration From Bethany

In the meantime, the month of December, 1881, had seen the movement of a colony of South Carolinians to Lamar County which was to result two years later in the organization of the second Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in that county. This was the Chicota Church, which was the only one of its denomination to prosper and grow in the county, or indeed in all of Northeast Texas. Of about a dozen Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches organized in Texas, the one at Chicota is believed to be the only one which outgrew home mission status and became self-supporting while an A.R.P. church. It was to have a well known and widely patronized school established in connection with it, and was to entertain the General Synod of the Church within thirteen years after its organization—the only time the supreme governing body of this denomination has ever met in Texas.

The new settlers did not go directly to Chicota, however, but settled first in the Southwest part of Lamar County, in the neighborhood of the Lamar Church. A year before the move was made from South Carolina, two representatives of the prospective colonists arrived in Texas to take a look at prospects in this new land. They were J. J. L. Gill and Robert A. Black, both members of Bethany Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in York County, South Carolina.²⁴ In view of the area they selected for the colony, they almost certainly consulted during their reconnaissance trip with the
Wares of the Lamar Church. As a result of their trip to “spy out the land,” the two Bethany men decided that the farm lands of Lamar County would be a suitable new home for the large group of York County people who wished to come to Texas. It is very likely the anticipated arrival of reinforcements from Bethany caused the Texas Presbytery to report at the 1880 General Synod meeting that Lamar was a “very hopeful field.”

The South Carolinians migrating to Texas chartered freight cars in which they placed their entire worldly possessions. The Associate Reformed Presbyterians in the group numbered eighteen—the Gill, Black and Joseph Jenkins families—six communicant members and twelve children. Bethany, which was organized in 1797, and was one of the oldest churches in the denomination, stood almost in the shadow of historic King’s Mountain, site of the famous battle of the American Revolution at which Presbyterian elders were prominent among the leaders of the victorious patriot forces. The Bethany Church expected long service from its members for most of the eighteen who set out in 1881 for a new home in Texas had known only one pastor—the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine Boyce who at the time the group left had served the Bethany congregation for thirty-two years. The eighteen colonists from the Bethany A.R.P. Church were, however, only part of the group which traveled together. Marshall Vandenburg, in his sketch of Northeast Texas Presbyterianism, says there was a total of eight families with sixty-six persons. Mrs. Sam Falls, who in 1964 was ninety-two years old and was then one of only two surviving members of the group which came from York County, recalled, however, that there were seventy-four persons—seventy-one of them white, and three Negroes.

The group’s departure by rail from York County was on Monday, December 14, 1881. It is most probable that the services at Bethany the day before had included earnest prayer by Mr. Boyce for the safety and welfare of these members and their families leaving to begin a new life in Texas. Mrs. Falls, then Alice Jenkins, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Jenkins, was eight years old at the time. Other daughters of this family were Rebecca and Nannie. Mrs. Falls recalled crossing the Mississippi River by ferry. The train arrived in Paris, county seat of Lamar County, on Saturday, December 19. The pious Associate Reformed Presbyterians had timed their trip so that no travel on the Sabbath would be necessary. No doubt they rested at Paris on the Sabbath day following their arrival, probably attending Presbyterian Church, U. S. (Southern), services there. Then they set out by wagon caravan for the Roxton community on the blackland prairies some twelve miles southwest of Paris. Roxton in those days was somewhat east of its present location and near the present community of Howland which at that time did not exist. When the Santa Fe railroad was built through Lamar County Roxton was moved to its present location on the railroad. The colonists reached their destination in time to observe Christmas in the place which they were to call home for only a little more than one year. The presence among the newcomers of six communicant members of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church explains why the Lamar Church at Roxton gained seven new members in 1882. This was the year that the Rev. R. E. Patterson and Dr. Reid visited and preached.
The corner of Lamar County which the Wares had selected as a place to settle, and where the group from Bethany now joined them, offered a better-than-average moral atmosphere for those rough days. In 1873, on petition of the citizens of the Roxton community, the Texas Legislature had passed a law prohibiting the sale of liquor within three miles of Roxton Chapel and Seminary. And on December 4, 1880, Precinct 2 which included Roxton had voted 169 to 145 for total prohibition of liquor sales in the precinct. The county court, as a result, ordered that after January 14, 1881, the precinct should be dry—the first local option ever achieved by popular vote in Lamar County. Very possibly the Wares took a leading part in this campaign to outlaw intoxicants. The arrival of the colony from South Carolina came in the midst of a period of rapid growth for Lamar County. In 1870 the United States census showed 15,790 persons in the county. In 1880, the year before the York County group arrived, the census recorded 27,193 inhabitants. By 1890, the total had grown to 37,302.

IV—The Removal to Chicota

Despite the hopes which had attended the settlement on the blacklands at Roxton, some aspects of the situation apparently did not please the group so recently uprooted from their homes amid the hills, streams and forests of their native South Carolina. No doubt the treeless black prairies, which can appear delightful when covered by spring flowers or fall harvests, can seem less hospitable when cold “northers” sweep across the country in the winter—the season in which the newcomers arrived. The black dirt roads, before the era of improved surfacing, often became impassable, and the Santa Fe Railroad was not to be built through that section until six years later.

No doubt homesick, the settlers soon found nearby an area much closer in appearance to their former home. It was at Chicota, in the same county but fifteen miles north of Paris. Chicota was adjacent to the fertile Red River bottom lands, but the residential community itself was located on sandy, wooded hills, with flowing springs. The Associate Reformed Presbyterian portion of the colony moved to Chicota early in 1883, a little more than a year after their arrival in Texas. One of the non-A.R.P. families which went to Chicota at the same time was that of Alec Ford.

The Chicota area was just emerging during those years from the pioneer stage. John Terrell Wilkins, one of the Methodist residents who welcomed the new neighbors from South Carolina and who soon was to donate the site for the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church building, had arrived from Rutherford County, North Carolina, in the late 1860’s or early 1870’s, and at that time had found panthers still roaming the neighborhood. Deer runs led through the forest to the springs, one of those deer runs being close to the A.R.P. Church site. Choctaw Indians from the Indian Territory across Red River were still coming by ferry in the 1880’s to trade at a store in Chicota.

V—Organization of the Chicota Church

At their new location, the former South Carolinians were visited in the spring of 1883 by the Rev. Edwin Erskine Patterson, who was to be listed
in the Synod's minutes for the next year, 1884, as supply minister for the Lamar Church at Roxton. The Chicota Church, which had been organized by then, was listed in 1884 as a vacancy. Mr. Patterson was a native of Burke County, Georgia, and was a relative of the Rev. Robert Emmette Patterson who a year earlier had visited the colony while it was at Roxton. Edwin Erskine Patterson, who had been licensed to preach only the year before, began serving the families at Chicota, as well as those at Roxton. It was under his leadership that they determined to establish a church of their own. J. J. L. Gill, who had led his people to a new land like a modern-day Moses, prepared a letter to the Texas Presbytery, which had been organized only seven years before, asking that a church be organized at Chicota.

The Texas Presbytery met that year at the Hardin County Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the first congregation of its denomination in Texas in direct connection with the A.R.P. General Synod. (Strictly speaking, the very first A.R.P Church to be organized in Texas was that at a community called County Line in Freestone and Navarro counties, which had entered into a temporary arrangement by which it was under the care of a presbytery of another denomination, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.) The Hardin County Church, a weak unit which was to disintegrate in 1891, never built a house of its own, but held services in a dilapidated union church building. Here in an isolated, sparsely settled section, amid deep forests still known as the Big Thicket, near the southeast corner of the state, the A.R.P. Texas Presbytery met in 1883. To this gathering Mr. Gill's request was presented. The reaction is related in Marshall Vanderburg's sketch: "When the appeal was read, one old elder rose and said, 'Brethren, that is the Macedonian call, and here is five dollars to help obey it.'"

The Presbytery thus approved the organization of a church in Chicota, and directed the Rev. James McKinney Little to conduct its organization, which he did in the fall of 1883. The minister, then fifty-five years old, was a native of Jefferson County, Georgia, and before ordination at the age of forty-seven had been a superintendent of public instruction, lawyer and prosecuting attorney at Andalusia, Alabama. He had moved to Milam County, Texas, in 1876 to minister to small A.R.P. churches in that area, and spent twenty years of hardship and self-denial in that ministry. The Centennial History says that there were twelve charter members of the Chicota Church. Marshall Vanderburg's sketch lists six of them by name: J. J. L. Gill and his wife, Rebecca; Robert A. Black and his wife, Martha, and their daughter, Mayme; and Mr. V. Lowrance. Others, as recalled by older residents, were Joseph Jenkins, and his wife, Ellen Lucretia; three younger members of the Black family—Bob, Mattie and W. A. J. (Will); and possibly one of the daughters of the Jenkins family. The Texas Presbytery's report to the General Synod in 1884 showed membership of the Chicota Church to be twelve persons, representing four families. The pulpit, the report showed, was still vacant. There had been two infant baptisms, and $40 had been paid for ministerial support.
It should be noted here that another Presbyterian denomination a few years earlier had organized a church in the Chicota section. The Cumberland Presbyterians, who until 1906 were the leading branch of Presbyterianism in Northeast Texas, had organized Center Springs Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the eastern part of the community about 1880. This church apparently reached its largest membership about 1900, when it totaled thirty-eight—about one-third the membership at that time of the Chicota Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The union in 1906 of the greater part of the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination with the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (Northern), resulted in much dissatisfaction among Cumberland Presbyterians in Northeast Texas, and led to large losses in membership for the combined church, so far as Northeast Texas congregations were concerned. The Center Springs Church shared these losses, and by 1909 was down to only five members. In 1915 it was dropped from the rolls of its General Assembly. Few of its members, however, seem to have gone into the nearby Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

VI—Early Leaders at Chicota

It would be interesting to have a complete roster of elders, deacons, Sabbath School officers and other church officials of the Chicota Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church during this period. The only source for a complete list, however, would be the Session minutes of the early years. Diligent inquiry has brought replies from the clerk of the Session, and from old families in the church, and if the minutes exist their whereabouts are unknown. This tragic loss, so typical of the state of records in many old churches, means that the splendid and no doubt at times heroic services of many of the pioneer families in this congregation can never be given their deserved recognition. In the absence of the church records, such information as is available from a variety of printed and verbal sources will be presented. It is impossible, in most cases, to say exactly when the persons mentioned came into the Chicota Church.

Elder J. J. L. Gill, who played so great a part in bringing the former Bethany people to Texas and in getting a church organized at Chicota, was a typical patriarch of the period. A vigorous, bewhiskered man, he was a Confederate veteran, with one arm permanently damaged from a wartime wound. For the rest of his life he saved the Minie ball which had smashed his arm. He served as a justice of the peace, and was known as "Squire" Gill. He is listed in the Synod's minutes for 1887 as Chicota Sabbath School superintendent. He was Chicota's delegate to the Texas Presbytery meeting in 1887; to the General Synod of 1896 which met at Chicota, during which he served on the Synod's Committee on Devotional Exercises; and to the General Synod of 1897 which met at the Head Springs Church, Belfast, Tennessee, during which he served on the Synod's Finance Committee. Another prominent member of the Chicota church, Elder Robert A. Black, became a delegate to the General Synod of 1888 which met at Pott's Station (now Pottsville), Arkansas, and served on the Synod's Committee on Presbytery Reports. During the near-quarter of a century that the Chicota church remained in connection with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the following
were among those who served as elders: Joseph Jenkins, W. A. J. (Will) Black (son of Robert), J. A. Y. Love, J. Kerr Oates, A. Leslie McCaslan, John Boyd, John Millen Galloway, L. C. Claitor, J. E. Caldwell and James F. Whitesides. Details of their church activities are difficult to assemble but information on some of the work of these church leaders is available. Elder Joseph Jenkins came from a family active in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches at Bethany and nearby communities, and members of the family continue to be active in the Chicota church. Elder J. Kerr Oates, who came to Chicota from Russellville, Arkansas, for some time led the singing at the Chicota Church. He used a tuning fork to set the pitch for the Psalm to be sung as no musical instrument was used at first for accompaniment of the singing. When an organ was procured after several years, it was over the opposition of at least one family. Presbyterians of that era were slow to acknowledge any place for instrumental music in their worship services. In 1901 Mr. Oates went to Little Rock, and from 1909 to 1918 he lived near Brighton, Tennessee, serving as superintendent of the denomination's Dunlap Orphanage. Elder W. A. J. Black served for a time as the Sabbath School superintendent of the Chicota Church. Elder J. A. Y. Love was for many years clerk of the Session. Mr. Love and his brother Robert (father of Grier Love who in recent years has been clerk of Session of the Chicota Presbyterian Church), came to this community from Pigsah Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Gastonia County, North Carolina. Mrs. J. A. Y. Love was the former Miss Emily Whitesides.

Elder A. Leslie McCaslan came originally from the historic old Long Cane Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Abbeville County, South Carolina, where the Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia was organized in 1790 and where the Second Presbytery was organized in 1801. He went first to Milam County, Texas, where the A.R.P. pastor was the veteran Rev. J. M. Little who some years earlier had presided at the organization of the Chicota Church. After a year or so in Milam County, Mr. McCaslan moved in 1898 to Chicota, where in 1900 he married Miss Virginia Wilkins, daughter of the man who had given the land for the new Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Elder John Millen Galloway came to Chicota from Corsicana in 1901, but returned to Corsicana in 1902. He was a brother of Mrs. Mary Galloway Giffen, the first foreign missionary of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Elder James F. Whitesides came to Chicota from Gaston County, North Carolina—from near the Bethany Church but across the state line in South Carolina. The Whitesides arrived in Lamar County in 1893 with their children Cindy, Elizabeth, John, Frank, Major and Mamie. Elder J. E. Caldwell and his wife, who had been Miss Elizabeth Watson, came from one of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Newberry County, South Carolina. Their sons, Joe, Boyce and Carroll, and their daughter Sarah who became Mrs. J. L. Powell, were among the members of the Chicota Church when it was still Associate Reformed. The Caldwell family, on coming to Texas, went first to Anderson County, but since there was no A.R.P. Church there, they moved on to Chicota.

The known list of deacons in the Chicota Associate Reformed Church is most probably incomplete. It is likely that in addition to the names listed as
deacons, some to the elders served in that capacity before being elevated to
the Session. Deacons included Tom Carder, from Rock Hill, South Carolina; Jim Lynch from Mississippi, who had been a Methodist until he married a member of this church; Bob Black, a son of the first Robert Black; and Alec McEeteer from Mississippi. Early Sabbath School superintendents, in addition to J. J. L. Gill and W. A. J. Black, included John Lowry Lee. Lowry Lee was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lee, and was the brother of M. T. Lee who is a present day elder in the Chicota Presbyterian Church.

Two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lee married men who became deacons in the Chicota Church, Mary Lee becoming Mrs. Tom Carder and Edna Lee becoming Mrs. Jim Lynch. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lee came to Texas from Selma, Alabama, accompanied by their daughter, Lula, who became Mrs. W. C. Payne, and by Mrs. Lee's sister, Mrs. Mary J. Bell and her husband James Mack Bell. They went first to Honey Grove, Texas, but after two or three years the family moved to Chicota.14

Another member of the church in its A.R.P. period was John McEtee from Mississippi. Still another was W. B. Ware, who had been an elder in the little Lamar A.R.P. Church at Roxton. After that church was disorganized, he moved to the Chicota area, and taught school at Center Springs. He was at this time a widower, and with his young daughter attended the Chicota Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.15

VII—The First Pastor, E. E. Patterson

By 1885, less than two years after the founding of the Chicota Church, its original four families and twelve members had grown to eight families and nineteen members. The report to the General Synod that year showed that during the preceding twelve months, under the missionary care of the Rev. E. E. Patterson, there had been six accessions to membership and two losses, one adult baptism and two infant baptisms. The report showed $30 paid as salary and $250 as "miscellaneous" expense—probably in connection with the building of the congregation's first house of worship. The report also showed that a Sabbath school had been started, with two teachers and eight pupils.16 The next year, as reflected in the 1886 minutes of the General Synod, the church lost one family but with four individual accessions the roll was brought to a net total of twenty-two members. One infant baptism was recorded, and the Sabbath school had nearly tripled, reporting twenty-two pupils.17

The outstanding project of these first years was the building of the first house of worship. The Centennial History says the structure was built in 1886,18 and Vanderburg's sketch says 1885.19 Quite possibly the earlier date marks the beginning of construction, and the other marks the completion and occupancy of the building. Until the building was ready, the Associate Reformed Presbyterians conducted their services in the Forest Chapel Methodist Church, a short distance to the west.20 The site for the new church as has been stated was donated by John T. Wilkins, a steward in the Forest Chapel Methodist Church. Land for a school and for a cemetery adjacent to the new A.R.P. Church was donated by his cousin, Mrs. E. C. (Elizabeth) Wilkins. Mrs. Falls recalled in 1964 that at the time of the
construction of the church, trees on the present location of the cemetery were cut into logs and hauled to the church building site, to be used as foundation blocks. The logs were moved by mule teams driven by her father, Joseph Jenkins, and by Mr. Gill. Years later, when the present building was erected, lumber from the first building was used in the new construction.

This early growth and construction proceeded without any pastor either having been called, or formally assigned as a supply by the Home Mission Board. The Rev. E. B. Patterson, then serving the Lamar Church at Roxton, possibly gave some time to Chicota. The minutes of the General Synod show that he did minister to the Chicota congregation in 1885 and 1886, but this was on a missionary basis. In the meantime, however, the new congregation was taking active steps toward calling Mr. Patterson as their permanent pastor. The General Synod Minutes of 1885 include, in the report of the Texas Presbytery, mention that Chicota had requested assignment of an ordained minister to preside at a congregational meeting in which the members could vote to call a pastor of their own choice. The Presbytery report also included a recommendation that the Synod supplement the Chicota ministerial salary by allotment of $225 from home missions funds. Chicota was at the time making efforts to build a church building, the report added.

Again in 1886 the Texas Presbytery reported to the General Synod that Chicota had extended a call to the Rev. E. E. Patterson, but that the call “had been referred back to the church for farther [sic] effort to reach the minimum subscription required by the Synod.” The same report said the Chicota Church was “in a hopeful condition, having received valuable additions.” Despite the delay in authorizing a call—delay occasioned by too small a salary—Mr. Patterson was nevertheless assigned to Chicota as “stated supply” pastor in 1886.

The next two years saw little growth. The church remained at seven families. In 1887 it gained one member and lost three, so that the roster dropped to twenty members. In 1888 there was a net gain of two members. Total funds raised in 1887 were $52.20, but 1888 must have been a very poor crop year, for the total dropped to $20. Efforts to call Mr. Patterson as regular pastor were continuing. The General Synod minutes of 1887 contain a report by the Texas Presbytery which referred to “a resolution presented by J. J. L. Gill, elder from Chicota, asking Synod for various reasons set forth to allow the Texas Presbytery to approve the call of Chicota Church to Rev. E. E. Patterson although they have not raised the minimum amount required by Synod in order to obtain the supplement to pastor’s salary on the usual sliding scale. . . . . We recommend that this request be granted, as it cannot possibly work any detriment to Synod and may be beneficial to the church.” The Presbytery also approved allotment to Mr. Patterson, as home mission supply minister, of $250 for the year.

The General Synod, as a result of this appeal, finally granted the request to authorize a call, and the call was accomplished the following year, as shown from the Texas Presbytery’s report to the General Synod of 1888:

Chicota Church, desiring the consummation of the pastoral relation between them and Rev. E. E. Patterson, again presented their call to Presbytery with subscription of $150. In accordance with the
permission of the last Synod, Presbytery placed this call in the hands of Rev. E. E. Patterson, and it was by him accepted on those conditions. We therefore request that his salary be supplemented on the sliding scale as per former regulations, viz., $225 first year, decreasing $25 annually.  

So, on November 3, 1888, five years after their organization as a church, the twenty-two members of the Chicota congregation assembled for the formal installation of the Rev. Mr. Patterson as their first called and installed pastor, but the pastor was to give only one-half of his time to the church. He had ministered to them either as missionary or as stated supply pastor since before they were organized.

The years of Mr. Patterson's pastorate were years of growth. By 1896, the membership had grown from the original twelve, and from the twenty-two at the time of the pastor's installation, to sixty-five. In January, 1896, Mr. Patterson resigned, after thirteen years service at Chicota—first as a home missionary, then as stated supply and finally as the first installed pastor. This was a longer period than any subsequent Associate Reformed Presbyterian minister was to serve at this church. Mr. Patterson went from Chicota to become stated supply at the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in New Lebanon, West Virginia. At the 1896 meeting of the General Synod, held in Chicota, the Virginia Presbytery report noted a request from the New Lebanon congregation that Mr. Patterson be authorized to remain with them as supply pastor until the spring meeting of 1897. He did, in fact, remain even past that presbytery meeting, but on December 15, 1897, left New Lebanon and transferred to the Presbyterian Church U.S.

VIII—The Frisco A.R.P. Church

While at Chicota, Mr. Patterson in 1891 organized another Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Lamar County, at the Frisco community a few miles north of Paris. This community was so named because of its location on the Frisco Railroad line from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Paris which had been constructed some four years earlier. W. J. Sanderson and Samuel Paine were ordained elders at the Frisco Church. In 1893 a church building was erected, costing $1,140. The building was damaged by three storms within a very short time after its completion, the first storm blowing it off its foundation blocks. In September, 1893, the Texas Presbytery met at Frisco.  

The Frisco Church, however, did not prosper as did the church at Chicota. By the time Mr. Patterson left Lamar County in 1896, the Frisco membership had reached only fourteen, and remained at that figure in 1897. The membership totaled sixteen in 1898 and 1899, but was down to fourteen again in 1900. Financial reports were correspondingly unimposing, the congregation's reports showing that only $36 was raised in 1898 for an average of 64 cents per member. When the 1896 General Synod met at Chicota, it adopted a Texas Presbytery report which included the following: "Since there is a debt of $187 hanging over the Frisco Church, we earnestly ask Synod to allow them $100 out of the Church extension Fund, the Presbytery promising to pay the balance."
Mr. Patterson's successors at Chicota continued to serve the Frisco Church on a part-time basis as long as it remained active. The most promising year must have been 1898, when six new members joined the church by certificate. Losses the same year, however, kept the net gain down to two. It was difficult for a pastor to serve a small church at such a distance as Frisco. This required that the Rev. T. W. Hayes, while he was at Chicot, travel by horse and buggy to Frisco on Saturday. His custom was to stay overnight at the home of the Hull family, owners of an extensive pear orchard which for years was a landmark on a ridge north of Paris. In 1901, the statistical tables of the General Synod minutes showed no report from Frisco except the number of members. The church was not listed in the 1902 minutes or later. The Centennial History published in 1904 does not record the church's having been closed, but presumably it was not active after 1900 or possibly 1901.

IX—The School, and Mr. Echols' Ministry

Mr. Patterson, as a half-time pastor of the Chicota Church, had at his disposal enough time to undertake the operation of a school. It was about 1888 that he opened what is now referred to as “The Old Presbyterian School,” or “The College.” He conducted this school until his departure, after which it was carried on by others. The school building was a two-story frame structure, just east of the church, with a porch at the front of each story. The upper floor, reached by two outside stairways from the lower porch to the upper one, served as a chapel and as an auditorium in which people of the community gathered for plays and concerts. Mr. Patterson secured a large bell, primarily for his school, and had it mounted on four tall posts. It also was used by the church, and on his departure some years later he donated the bell to the church. It is now in the belfry of the present church building.

Enrollment at the school averaged about 30. Grades through high school were taught by Mr. Patterson, with assistants being employed when needed. J. E. Caldwell, an elder in the Chicota Church and a graduate of Erskine College, taught part of the time. Mrs. L. C. Claitor was the first primary teacher and was followed by Mrs. J. E. Caldwell who taught until the school closed. Many times the older and more advanced students helped instruct the younger ones. Students often paid their tuition with farm produce or livestock. One farmer is said to have swapped a piece of land for his son’s tuition. The school apparently attracted students from a wide area, since it offered a good education for that day. Among those from other counties was Lemuel Isham Echols from Navarro County, later to become an Associate Reformed Presbyterian minister and to supply the Chicota Church for a time. Two young women from Milam County also attended the Chicota school. Classes finally were discontinued because of the growth of state-supported education.

Upon Mr. Patterson's departure in 1896 Mr. Echols became supply pastor. This was, for him, a return to the community to which he had gone for schooling only a few years before. He served in this capacity for four
months of 1896, also giving one-fourth of his time to the Frisco Church as Mr. Patterson had done." Mr. Echols at this time had not been ordained, but he had been accepted as a student of theology by the Texas Presbytery meeting at the Frisco Church in September, 1893. He had been licensed after finishing his junior year at Erskine College thereby achieving a status of probationary nature preliminary until his ordination in May, 1896. After the four months of supply preaching at Chicota, he returned to Erskine in the fall of 1896. Following graduation he served churches in Kentucky, Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia, and for four years was field representative of the Board of Home Missions. He became moderator of the General Synod in 1929, and was awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree by Erskine College in 1932. He died in 1945. Mr. Echols' early ministry, however, was closely tied to Chicota, by virtue of both his education there and his first preaching appointment there. His work at Chicota was commended by the Texas Presbytery when it reported to the General Synod of 1896 that "Mr. L. I. Eckels [sic], our licentiate, has labored very acceptably for the last four months at Chicota and Frisco."

**X—General Synod Meeting, and Ministry of Mr. Simpson**

A high point in the history of the Chicota Church was reached in 1896 when it entertained the General Synod, the only time that body met within the bounds of the Texas Presbytery. The Synod convened October 22, with Dr. Thomas Gilmore Boyce, pastor of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Salem, Tennessee, in the chair as moderator. More than one hundred persons attended, and the entire community, including friends in other denominations, helped provide rooms and meals for the visitors. One family, it is still recalled, saved choice items of food as the Synod meeting date drew near, and if one of the children started to open a jar of blackberry jam, for instance, he was admonished to "save it for Synod!"

The General Synod took note of the denomination's earliest efforts in the state when the moderator, Dr. Boyce, was presented with a gavel made of wood taken from the County Line School House on the boundary of Freestone and Navarro counties. As already stated, this school building, the first Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Texas had been organized on November 14, 1865, under the ministry of the Rev. T. J. Bonner. This church, although A.R.P., had been placed upon its organization temporarily under the care of the Central Texas Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church U.S.

The five-day Synod conducted business from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, with time out only for a sermon at 11 a.m. and for lunch. At 7:30 o'clock each night, a public service was held which was attended not only by the delegates but by the people of Chicota. One service which brought sadness, especially to pioneer members of the Chicota Church, was a memorial service for the Rev. James McKinney Little, who had died in Milam County, Texas, on September 11, just a few weeks before the Synod convened. He was the minister who by direction of the Texas Presbytery had presided thirteen years earlier at the organization of the Chicota Church. The meeting of the General Synod was in many ways a great reunion for the members of the
Chicota Church. They entertained preachers who had been their pastors in other communities. They welcomed kinsmen among the ministers and lay delegates from former residences, to which many of the Chicota members had not returned since their migration to Texas.

Among the visitors most interested in the Chicota community was the Rev. John Hemphill Simpson, a member of the First Presbytery. In 1897 Mr. Simpson came to Chicota as supply pastor, and no doubt negotiations for his assignment began during the Synod meeting. Mr. Simpson at that time was a veteran minister, 65 years old. He was a native of Chester County, South Carolina, who as a student at Erskine had gone through four years of college study without a single absence from class. After service as a Confederate chaplain, he devoted a quarter of a century to the pastorate of the New Lebanon, West Virginia, Church, six years to home mission work in North Carolina and in Kentucky, and before coming to Chicota he had served as principal of an academy at Hickory Grove, South Carolina. To the Chicota people, a favorite remark of Mr. Simpson’s became familiar, as it had to members of other churches he had served: “If I commenced Hebrew and violin music at the same time and have kept up the study of both since, but do not expect to make a finish of either until I get to Heaven.” To a fellow minister who asked why he continued the study of Hebrew after being graduated from the Seminary, Mr. Simpson replied that when he got to Heaven he wanted to be able to talk with Moses and Abraham in their native tongue. Mr. Simpson’s service at Chicota seems to have been successful, since Synod minutes of that year show nine accessions to membership on profession of faith, and one by certificate. Unfortunately, this gain was offset by the loss of two members by death and eight by certificate.

In late 1897 Mr. Simpson left the Chicota pastorate to return to his former home, Hickory Grove, South Carolina, and to accept the superintendency of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Orphanage which was opened there on Thanksgiving Day, November 25, 1897. His daughter, Miss Lois Simpson, was matron of the home. On January 11, 1905, he and his daughter went with the fifteen children in their care to Tipton County, Tennessee, as their institution was incorporated into the present William H. Dunlap Orphanage. Mr. Simpson was superintendent at the new location for two years, making a total of nine years in that service.

The Chicota Church, even before the year 1897 had ended, issued a call for a new permanent pastor. The report of the Texas Presbytery to the General Synod of 1897 noted that the call for the Rev. T. W. Hayes was accompanied by a subscription for “something over $300; they guarantee $300 for half his time. Frisco acquires in the call, promising $50 a year. We ask that we be allowed $150 for cultivation of the Frisco field the coming year.” On January 15, 1898, Mr. Hayes was installed for a half-time pastorate at Chicota. This minister was a native of York County, South Carolina, from whence had come the original group which organized the Chicota Church. He was to remain at Chicota for more than eight years.
About the time of his arrival, the church bought a house for a manse. This building later burned during the pastorate of the Rev. A. B. Dickey, after the Chicota Church had been transferred to the United Presbyterians. A new manse was built to replace it.

Mr. Hayes was thirty years of age when he arrived at Chicota. He was born near Rock Hill, South Carolina, April 4, 1867, the son of William Riley Hayes and Eleanor Jane Whitesides Hayes. After graduation from Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary, he was appointed by the Board of Home Missions to supply the mission church at Corsicana, Texas, which he did for sixteen months. He was ordained by the Texas Presbytery, meeting on April 18, 1897, at Marlow, in Milam County, in the residence of A. L. McCaslan who later moved to Chicota and became an elder in the church there. Mr. Hayes married Miss Frances Estelle Pope of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, on October 6, 1897, probably immediately after receiving the call to Chicota. Under Mr. Hayes' leadership, the Chicota Church made steady progress. Membership, which had been sixty-five when he was called, increased to seventy-three in 1898; to seventy-six in 1899; to eighty-five in 1900; and, after a drop to seventy-five in 1901 when two members were lost by death and eight by certificate, it was up to eighty-nine in 1902. Banner years for membership increase were 1898 when fourteen joined on profession of faith and two by certificate; 1900 when twelve joined on profession; and 1902 when five joined on profession and thirteen by certificate.

Finances showed a corresponding increase. The $300 salary which was promised and paid in 1898 and 1899 was increased to $340 in 1900, to $365 in 1901 and to $376 in 1902, a large amount for so small a church in those days. The 1901 offerings averaged $7.44 per capita. As local giving increased, the home mission supplement decreased. It was down to $125 in 1900, to $50 in 1901, and the church became self-supporting in 1902. The Sabbath school grew from seventy pupils in 1896 to one hundred in 1901. A report on Women's Society, first appeared in the General Synod minutes of 1896 when there were twenty-two members, and by 1902 there were twenty-four members. The young people's society, first reported to the General Synod in 1898, Mr. Hayes' first year, with thirty members, by 1902 had grown to fifty members.

By 1903, the membership had so grown that the church asked for three-fourths of its pastor's time, instead of half time as formerly. Under Mr. Hayes' leadership the school building was remodeled, and the high school maintained high standards. The church eventually paid Mr. Hayes $500 a year. He refused an offer from the Corsicana church, which he previously had served as a supply minister, to return there at a larger cash salary than he received at Chicota. He declared he was better off at Chicota, because his members brought in, in addition to his salary, all the meat, lard, corn and fruit that he needed.

Mr. Hayes resigned the Chicota pastorate in 1906, however, to become pastor of the Spartanburg, South Carolina, Church. In 1908, because of his health, physicians advised him to move west, and he became supply pastor.
for a year at Blair, Oklahoma, which was in the Texas Presbytery. His illness was found to be tuberculosis and he then moved to the still drier climate of Roswell, New Mexico, where for a year and a half he was pastor of a Presbyterian Church (not A.R.P.) until declining health forced him to retire. In New Mexico, his wife successfully taught school, was elected county superintendent of schools, and served as dean of women at the New Mexico Agricultural and Mechanical College. Mr. Hayes died December 12, 1913.

XII—Last A.R.P. Years and Transfer to U.P. Church

After the resignation and departure of Mr. Hayes, the Chicota Church was served for a few months by the Rev. Lewis Hickman, a native of Virginia who had been pastor at Havana, Arkansas, since 1902. After Mr. Hickman left, the church was served from July to November, 1906, by the Rev. Joseph Lowry Pressly, son of a president of Erskine College. Mr. Pressly was perhaps unique in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, in that he devoted his entire career to serving assignments from the Board of Home Missions, and in supplying vacant pulpits. Most of his home mission services was in a twenty-seven-year stay at Salem, near Andalusia, Alabama, from 1909 to his death in 1936. He founded several A.R.P. churches in that part of Alabama. The talent for which many at Chicota would have remembered him was his ability to quote more Scripture from memory than any other minister in his denomination. He knew the entire books of Psalms and Proverbs word for word.

The Rev. Clifford Turner Bryson, coming to Chicota from Bethany, Mississippi, served the Chicota church from June 22, 1907, to Dec. 17, 1908. The last pastor of the church under the Associate Reformed Presbyterian General Synod, Mr. Bryson was ordained during his service at Chicota by the Texas Presbytery at its meeting October 25, 1907. Mr. Bryson in December, 1908 became pastor of the Pottsville and Bethany churches in Arkansas, which he served until his death forty years later.

Reverses came to the Chicota Church in May 1908, when a flood damaged the land and crops of members in nearby Boggy Bend of the Red River. In this area, most of the members' farms were located. At nearby Arthur City, the river height registered 43 feet 5 inches on the government gauge. Old settlers said the highest previous river level had been 33 feet in 1843. Many farms along the river were damaged by having the topsoil washed away, or by being covered with silt. This loss caused at least three of the most influential families to become discouraged and leave, and crippled the church's ability to support a pastor.

Since other churches in the Texas Presbytery were mission churches, financially weak, the Presbytery requested the General Synod which met Nov. 5, 1908, at Newberry, South Carolina, to authorize transfer of the entire presbytery to the United Presbyterian Church. The U.P. Church was larger and was better able to support home mission work, and already had cooperated in support of the A.R.P. mission church in Corsicana, adding $1,500 to the $10,000 which the Associate Reformed General Synod had contributed for building purposes at Corsicana. The General Synod meeting
in Newberry approved the request for transfer, and Chicota—after a quarter of a century as an A.R.P. Church—became United Presbyterian along with the rest of the presbytery. It was placed in the Synod of Kansas.44

The degree to which the 1908 misfortunes had affected the Chicota Church may be seen in reports by the Texas Presbytery to the Synod of Kansas. Membership in 1909 was only forty-eight. It was forty-nine in 1910 and forty-five in 1911. For salary of the pastor, $50 was raised in 1909, with total financial offerings being $181. In 1910, however, the Chicota Church was on the road to recovery, paying $300 for salary and a total of $358 for all causes, to reach an average of $7.31 per member. In 1911, its per capita liberality was even more marked, with $250 paid on salary and $514 for all causes, an average of $11.42 per member. During these three years, the United Presbyterian Board of Home Missions supplemented the local budget with $400, $375, and $150 respectively. In the year 1911, when there were nine removals and one death, the church became a half-time responsibility of the pastor instead of three-fourths time as previously.45

XIII—Lingering A.R.P. Influences

The twelve years which followed the transfer to the United Presbyterian Church made little difference in actual practice, however. The United Presbyterians of that time, prior to their later merger with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. were the northern branch of the original Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and they followed the same practice as the A.R.P.s of that day in singing the Psalms only in their services. The principal change brought about by the switch to the U. P. Church was that some of the ministers came from the North, instead of exclusively from the Southern states. At least two of the U. P. ministers who were to serve at Chicota, however, were Southerners who started their careers in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

For a few months in 1909, after departure of Mr. Bryson to Arkansas, the church was served by the Rev. (later Dr.) Moses Philip Cain, a native of Jefferson County, Georgia, who had started his ministry in the A.R.P. Church as supply pastor at First Church, Tampa, Florida. In 1909 he accepted appointment in the United Presbyterian Church, with his first U. P. pastorate being at Chicota. While there he also served as stated clerk of the Texas Presbytery. After a few months he left, to serve U. P. and Southern Presbyterian churches in Texas, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida and elsewhere.46

Another United Presbyterian pastor at Chicota with an A.R.P. background was the Rev. William Edgar Anderson, a native of Spartanburg County, South Carolina. He served A.R.P. pastorates in Virginia and at Marlow, Texas, from 1902 to 1907. Transferring then to the U. P. Church, he was assigned first to a Kansas pastorate, then to Chicota, then back to Kansas. He was back in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Arkansas in 1916-18, and after that engaged in a varied career of supply work, evangelism, teaching and livestock raising.47
In addition to Frisco, another offshoot of the Chicota Church was at Arthur City, five miles to the east. This church, however, was not organized until after the Chicota Church had been transferred to the United Presbyterians. The Rev. Peter Vanderkamp was the Chicota pastor when the Arthur City congregation was organized. It did not last long, because of small membership and limited finances, and the building and furniture were sold a short time later. Mr. Vanderkamp was a commissioner from the Texas Presbytery to the United Presbyterian General Assembly of 1911, while he was the Chicota pastor.

In 1920, it was proposed that the Chicota Church transfer from the United Presbyterian Church to the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern), and the congregation voted to do so despite the opposition of some members. It has been affiliated with the Southern Presbyterian Church since, although it is interesting to note that a ladies' Sabbath school class still uses the Associate Reformed Presbyterian literature.

The Chicota Church, as an Associate Reformed Presbyterian congregation for a quarter of a century, was a source of power and influence. It is believed to have been the only one in the presbytery which became self-supporting in the A.R.P. era, and it was the only one in the Presbytery which ever entertained the General Synod. It maintained a highly respected school which attracted students from other counties, as well as Lamar.

Descendants of its members continue the Church today as an active congregation in the Southern Presbyterian Church. Others are active in the First Presbyterian Church of Paris, Texas. Still others are active in churches of many other areas to which they have moved.

For the highlights of early migration to Texas by members of denomination, see A. J. Ranson, "The Texas Presbytery," in The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church [edited by a committee of changing membership, of which J. C. Galloway was chairman at the time of publication, 1904], pp. 35-36. Although this volume seems to have been very largely a compilation, it will be referred to in these notes by the name of the final chairman of the editing group. Hereinafter cited as The Centennial History.

Prominent among the very earliest A.R.P. missionaries to Texas, the Rev. Thomas Joel Bonner was typical of those who ranged the state, preaching to small groups. After moving in 1859 from his native Alabama to Freestone County, he was so isolated from the churches of his denomination that "for perhaps fifteen years, he never saw the face or heard the voice of an Associate Reformed minister," yet his work and that of others was so fruitful that within seventeen years he presided at the organization of the Texas Presbytery. See Galloway, op. cit., pp. 62-63.
Minutes of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1880. Minutes of this period, in manuscript, are paged incorrectly or not at all. Future references in footnotes to this source will use the abbreviated form, MGSARPC.


MGSARPC, 1881.

Galloway, Centennial History, 272-273.

MGSARPC, 1881.

Kennedy, Sesquicentennial History, 208.

MGSARPC, 1881.


MGSARPC, 1882.

Kennedy, Sesquicentennial History, 288-289.

MGSARPC, 1882.

MGSARPC, 1884.

MGSARPC, 1882.

MGSARPC, 1883.

MGSARPC, 1885.

MGSARPC, 1886.

Vanderburg, "The Presbyterians of Northeast Texas," 60.

Loc cit.

Galloway, Centennial History, 65.

Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 60.

Since material for this article was gathered, Mrs. Falls has died; so, also, has the other survivor referred to—Mrs. J. H. Crawford who was born Eunice Black. Mrs. Crawford was born to an A.R.P. family, but married a Methodist and became a member of her husband’s church.

This, and other information in the next paragraph, regarding the trip itself, is from personal recollections of the late Mrs. Falls, as told to Miss Janie Whitesides of Chicota, Texas.

A. W. Neville, The History of Lamar County, p. 184.

Ibid., p. 182.

Ibid., p. 201.


Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 61.

Personal recollections of Mrs. A. L. McCaslan of Paris, Texas, in interviews with the author. The next paragraph also is from the same source.

Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 61.

MGSARPC, 1884.

From an interview by the author with a niece, Miss Alice Patterson of Augusta, Georgia.

Galloway, op. cit., p. 272.
All the information on the request for organization, and the action taken in Presbytery, is from Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 61.

This and the following information on the Hardin County Church is from Galloway, op. cit., pp. 483-484.


Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 61.


Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 61.

*MGSARPC*, 1884.


Recollections of Mrs. McCaslan.

From an interview by the author with Mr. Gill's granddaughter, Miss Janie Whitesides.

*MGSARPC*, 1887; 1896; 1897.

*MGSARPC*, 1888.

The order in which they are presented is not necessarily that in which they came into this church, or that in which they were elected elders.

This list and the following information with regard to some of them, is from recollections of Mrs. McCaslan except as otherwise noted.

Kennedy, op. cit., p. 36.

Information on deacons and on John Lowry Lee is from recollections of Mr. and Mrs. M. T. Lee of Chicota, Texas, in an interview with the author.

Recollections of Mrs. McCaslan.

*MGSARPC*, 1885.

*MGSARPC*, 1886.

Galloway, op. cit., p. 444.

Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 61.

Recollections of Mrs. McCaslan.

Recollections of Mrs. Falls as told to Miss Whitesides.

*MGSARPC*, 1884; 1885; 1886.

Under Presbyterian policy, such a visiting minister is moderator of the congregational meeting, and in popular terminology is said to "moderate the call."

*MGSARPC*, 1885.

*MGSARPC*, 1886.

*MGSARPC*, 1887, 1888.

*MGSARPC*, 1888.

*MGSARPC*, 1896.

Loc. cit.

Galloway, op. cit., p. 272.

Statistical data in this and the following paragraph are found in MGSARPC, 1896 through 1901.

Recollections of Mrs. McCaslan.

Information on this school is from Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 84, except as otherwise noted. The building, later converted to residential use, has been examined by the author. It was torn down about 1940.

Recalled by Mrs. McCaslan, as are also the names of teachers assisting Mr. Patterson, and the matter of attendance by out-of-county students.

Data regarding Mr. Echols in this paragraph are from Galloway, op. cit., p. 112, except as otherwise noted.

Ibid., p. 476.

MGSARPC, 1896.

All information on the General Synod meeting at Chicota is from Synod minutes of that year except as otherwise noted.

Recollections of Mrs. McCaslan.


Ibid., pp. 348-348.

MGSARPC, 1897.

Kennedy, op. cit., p. 36.

All information on Mr. Hayes and his ministry, except as otherwise credited, is from Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

MGSARPC, 1897.

Recollections of Mrs. McCaslan.

MGSARPC, 1897.

Recalled by Mrs. McCaslan; the same source is credited for information on the pastorate of the Rev. Lewis Hickman, mentioned two paragraphs later.

Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 273-274.

Ibid., pp. 98-99.

Neville, op. cit., p. 86.

Recollections of Mrs. McCaslan.

MGSARPC, 1908.

Minutes of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, 1908.


Ibid., pp. 65-66.

Vanderburg, op. cit., p. 63.

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Minutes of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, on file at the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.