

# THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



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Vol. XLII

SPRING & SUMMER

Nos. 1 & 2

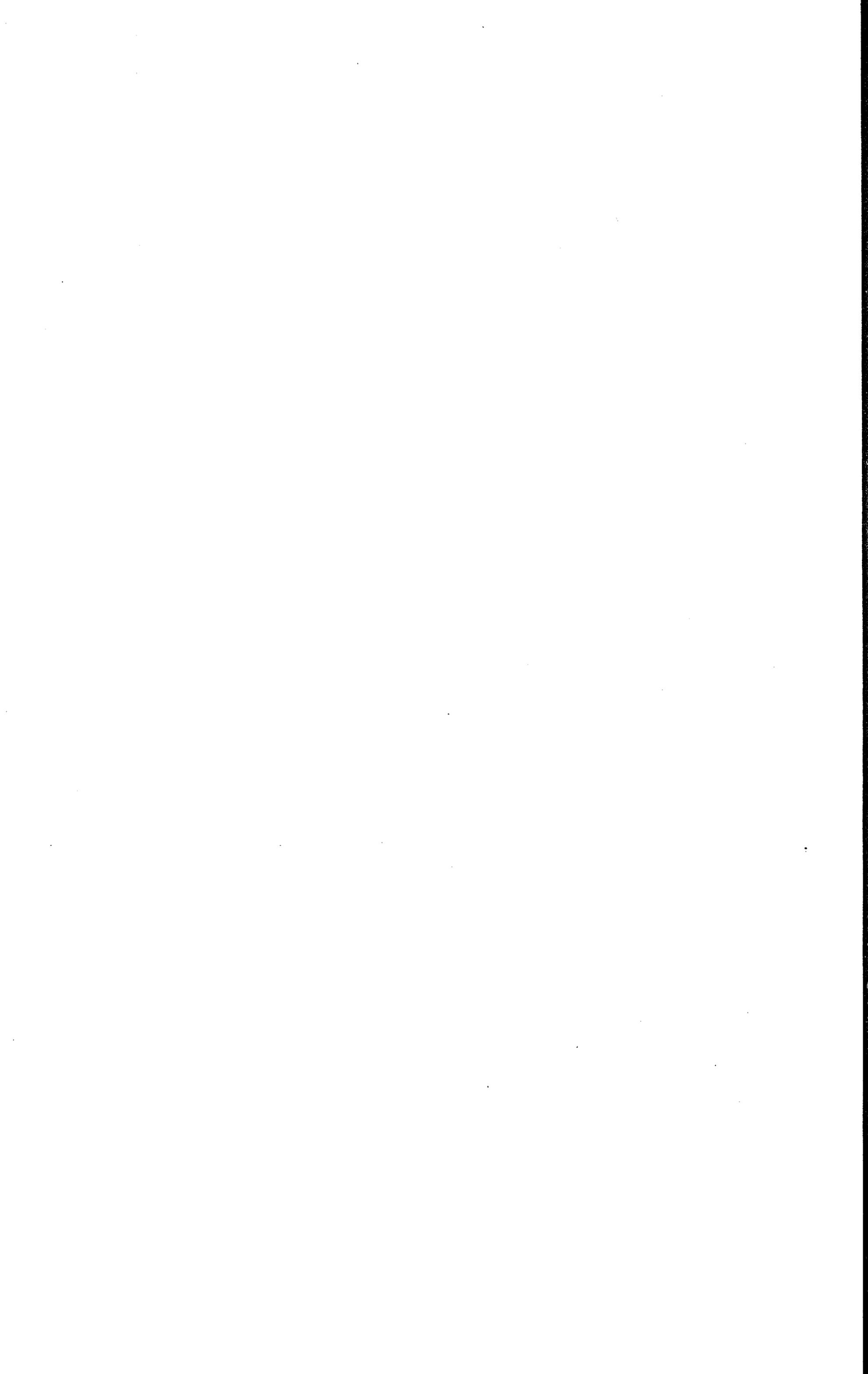
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Milo B. Howard, Jr., Editor

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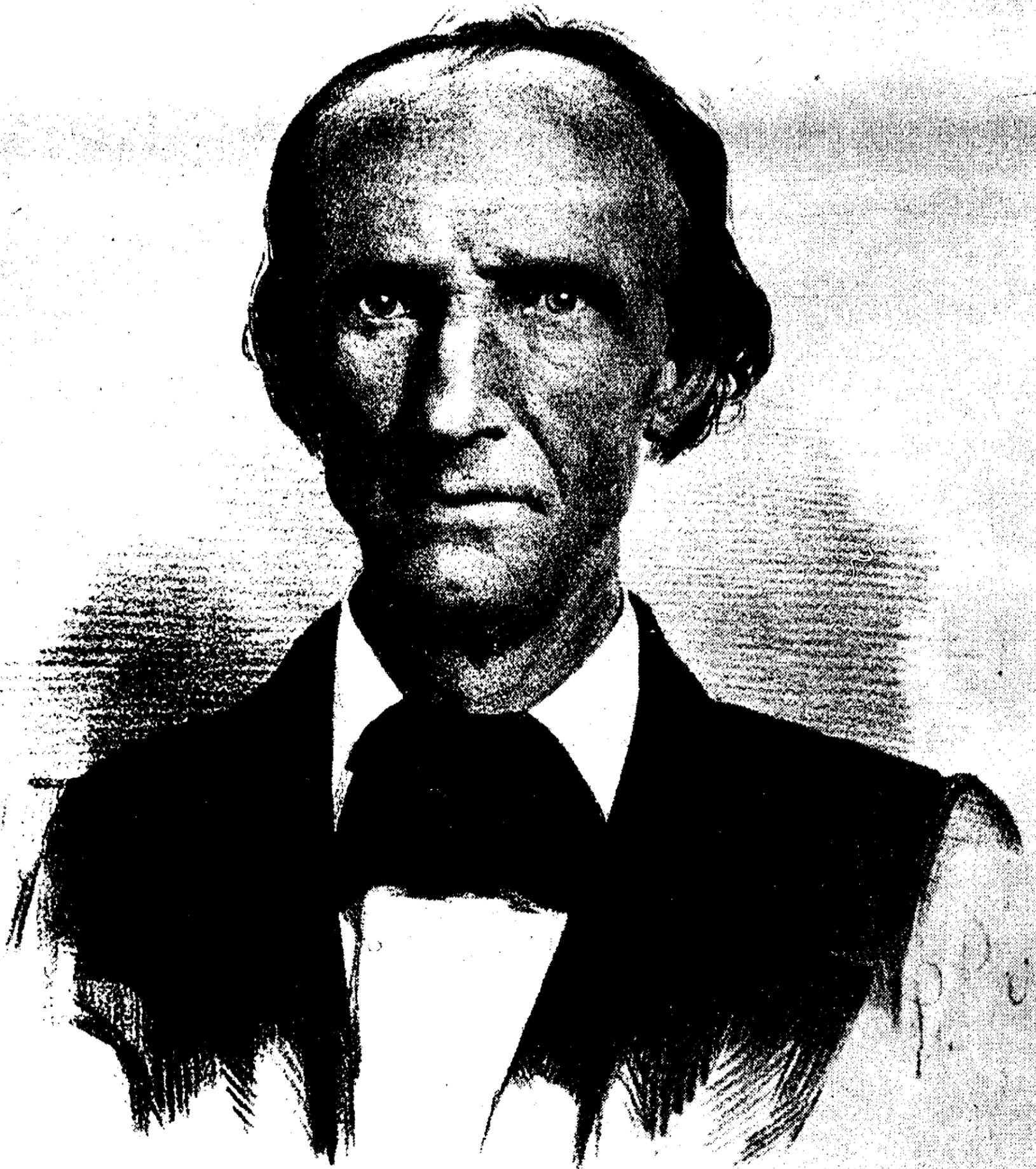
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Wm. G. Wagner's Lith. 36 Hudson St. Philad.

*Henry Bryson*

Pastor of the Associate Presbyterian Church VINEY GROVE, TENN.  
Moderator of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South 1859.

*Published by Joseph M. Wilson N<sup>o</sup> 111 South 10<sup>th</sup> St. Phila.*

FRONTIER EVANGELIST  
THE JOURNAL OF HENRY BRYSON

edited by

John R. Williams

In his history of religion in the old southwest, Walter Brownlow Posey began his discussion of the trials of the traveling evangelists of the early nineteenth century by noting that, "The life of any preacher was hard. The ministry was no profession for a weakling, and preaching was no calling for one who loved his comforts." Posey's descriptions of "treacherous" roads and of "swollen streams" sans bridges<sup>1</sup> could well have been drawn from the journal a young evangelist named Henry Bryson kept while on a journey through Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida in 1826 and 1827. The uncertainty of life for one engaged in such an endeavor is illustrated by the fact that when Bryson finally returned to his home in South Carolina after an absence of many months in the wilds, he arrived in the best Tom Sawyer fashion to find his funeral in progress.

Henry Bryson was born February 20, 1799, to Scotch Irish parents in Laurens District, South Carolina. He studied at Union Academy in Abbeville District, and in 1823 he graduated from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky. He wanted to enter the ministry, but because his father had died and he was needed at home, he studied theology privately with John T. Pressly, the pastor of the local congregation of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, which his parents had joined while he was at Transylvania, rather than going to a seminary.<sup>2</sup>

Bryson was probably well trained, for this was not as informal an arrangement as it may seem. Pressley, who, incidentally, had some years previously journeyed to Tennessee on a mission much like the one his protégé' was to undertake,

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Brownlow Posey, *Frontier Mission: A History of Religion West of the Southern Appalachians to 1861* (Lexington, 1966), 19.

<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all biographical information about Bryson not drawn from the journal comes from *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Charleston, 1905), 81-83.

was a recognized theologian. He was the synod's "Professor of Divinity" from 1825 to 1831, apparently thus being authorized to teach privately. In 1831 Pressley became the only teacher at a seminary in Pittsburg. He later served as the moderator of the A.R.P. Synod and he was also elected president of Erskine College, although he declined the post.<sup>3</sup> The fact that he was Bryson's pastor was convenient, for the education-conscious Associate Reformed Presbyterians probably would not have allowed the young man to pursue his education in this manner under most ministers. Bryson completed his studies and was licensed to preach (not administer the sacraments; that required ordination) by the Second Presbytery of South Carolina on March 4, 1826. In December of that year, at the direction of his presbytery, he began the evangelistic tour described in his journal.

Despite the fascinating details Bryson recorded, it is not possible to trace his route precisely. He often mentioned only the surnames of the people he visited and did not tell where they lived. On several occasions he spent several days moving about in one general area. And, he was lost at least once. Generally, however, his path can be followed.

Leaving his native South Carolina, he crossed the Savannah River into Georgia and passed through Washington, Lexington, Athens, Winder and to Lawrenceville. He then went southeast as far as Covington, southwest to McDonough, and northwest to Decatur and to the Chattahoochee where he crossed into present-day Forsyth County. He completed the first Georgia leg of his journey by traveling northwest to Chattanooga.

In Tennessee the young preacher crossed the Tennessee River and went by way of Jasper and Winchester to Fayetteville in Lincoln County, where he would later be a pastor. He spent some time in this general area, including a side trip into Maury County (although Maury and Lincoln are not now contiguous, they once touched corner to corner), before turning south into Alabama.

Bryson traveled almost due south through Hazel Green,

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<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 304-305.

Huntsville, and again across the Tennessee River. He continued south to Blountsville and to Elyton in Jefferson County before turning back up Jones Valley and across to the Coosa Valley near New London. He then passed through Montevallo, Centreville, and down the Cahaba Valley to Selma. After some time in the Selma area, including a trip northwest to Perry County, Bryson crossed the Alabama River near Portland. He traveled through Wilcox County and probably a corner of Monroe on the way to Conecuh County. Here he again made side trips, including a retracing of his steps back to Portland, before setting out for Florida.

The evangelist's route then took him near present-day Andalusia, across the Pea River to near today's Daleville, across the Choctawhatchee, and over the Chattahoochee into southwest Georgia. He spent some time in the areas of Quincy and Tallahassee, Florida before following a similar path back to and through south Alabama. He visited Claiborne and then went north up the Alabama Valley, crossing the river at Portland again.

At this point the journal *per se* ends. What follows is a "Way Bill." In the journal Bryson kept a careful record of his expenses and of the distances he traveled, apparently in order to be able to present an accurate account to his presbytery. The way bill is this record without the interesting comments of the journal.

The way bill begins in Florida. It is possible that Bryson returned to that state after the last journal entry, and that there is a gap between the two accounts. This seems unlikely, however, considering the time the trip would have taken. It would have made it very difficult for him to have returned to South Carolina as soon as we know that he did. More likely, the way bill overlaps the last part of the journal. It begins, as we have noted, in Florida, and it gives Bryson's route north through Alabama and to the northwest corner of Tennessee.

It is not certain why Bryson discontinued the journal in favor of the way bill (if indeed he did; it may be that the last part of the former is simply lost), nor why even the way bill does not detail his journey all the way back to South Carolina.

It seems likely, however, that the ending of the journal, at least, coincided with an illness. According to *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, "During this journey he was stricken with fever in Florida. His life was despaired of when an old Scotch Highlander visited him and prayed earnestly for him in Gaelic. He began at once to improve and always felt that his recovery was in answer to that prayer."<sup>4</sup> The only serious illness in Florida mentioned in the journal, however, is that of Bryson's horse. It is probable that the evangelist became ill in Alabama, not Florida, probably at about the time the journal proper ends (June 13, 1827). It is also logical that after his recovery, being both weak and behind schedule, he traveled faster and did less evangelizing on the way home, thus having less about which to write and less time in which to do it.

Even the way bill, however, is incomplete. It shows that he traveled north to Greensboro, Tuscaloosa, and Russelville, and northeast to Athens and to Fayetteville, Tennessee. He then turned northwest to Maury County, Centerville, and Paris, and west to Dresden and into Obion, Tennessee's most northwestern county. At this point the record ends.

It is possible that the young preacher went through Kentucky on his way home, perhaps even stopping at his *alma mater* in Lexington. If this is the case, the fact that he turned in the opposite direction from South Carolina at Fayetteville was probably the result of the route planned by his presbytery. It is also possible, however, that in his weakened condition he was seeking a longer but easier way home. The roads he traveled during the way bill period were certainly better than those in northeast Alabama and north Georgia. He also avoided the sparsely settled Creek and Cherokee territories and the worst of the mountains. The fact that the way bill ends virtually on the banks of the Mississippi suggests that he may have gone by boat up that river and the Ohio to some point where easy land transportation would have been available—perhaps a stage from Louisville to Lexington and across the mountains.

Whatever his route and why he took it, he must have traveled fairly swiftly from Obion. The journal ends in mid-

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<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 82.

June, and, as we have seen, it is likely that he was delayed for some time by an illness before continuing north. According to the *Centennial History* the trip lasted a year, but it also records that "On the 3rd day of November, 1827, he was ordained to the full work of the ministry."<sup>5</sup> Since this ordination probably did not take place immediately upon his return, it seems likely that he was in South Carolina at least by early October.

For much of his life Bryson was an influential figure in his denomination, but not as a traveling evangelist. He married Hannah McMullen and they moved to Lincoln County, Tennessee. There, in addition to preaching, he conducted a "classical academy" at his home.<sup>6</sup> According to one writer, Viney Grove Academy "once ranked with the standard educational institutions of the South."<sup>7</sup>

In 1827 or 1828 Bryson and another minister, John Renwick, organized Prosperity Church near Fayetteville. Bryson was its minister until 1847 when he resigned because of poor health. The first building was a log house with a dirt floor, but in 1841 and 1842 a new building was constructed. It was destroyed by an arsonist, however, and a third building was erected in 1881 and 1882, a few years after Bryson's death.<sup>8</sup> Bryson is also said to have organized Bethel Church in Lincoln County in 1830, and to have been its first pastor.<sup>9</sup> In his journal (entry for January 14, 1827), however, he mentioned worshipping in a church by that name in that same region which was obviously already in operation when he arrived. In 1859 he was elected moderator of his denomination's Synod.<sup>10</sup> Although he was in poor health for much of his life, he lived until 1874.

In 1919 the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

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<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 82-83.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>7</sup>*The Goodspeed Histories of Maury, Williamson, Rutherford, Wilson, Bedford & Marshall Counties of Tennessee*, reprinted from *Goodspeed's History of Tennessee* (1866) (Columbia, Tenn., 1971), 783.

<sup>8</sup>*Centennial History*, 552-553.

<sup>9</sup>*Goodspeed Histories*, 784.

<sup>10</sup>Joseph M. Wilson, *The Presbyterian Historical Almanac and Annual Remembrances of the Church for 1860* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1860), II, plate facing 184.

established a college at Fayetteville, Tennessee and named it in Bryson's honor. It was closed in 1929 because the church could not afford to support two colleges (the other was Erskine) during the depression. However, "A large group of Bryson alumni and friends come to the Fayetteville A.R. Presbyterian Church each June for a reunion — no school left — but they have each other and what a marvelous spirit they have," according to a participant.<sup>11</sup>

Henry Bryson probably prepared a clean copy of his journal to present to his presbytery, but neither his original notes nor such a copy can be found. The present text is that of a copy made some years ago by Mrs. Pressley Fife of Fayetteville, Tennessee. She worked from what she described as a "very bad copy on onion skin."<sup>12</sup> There are many obvious errors in this version. Some, like "Laurensville" for Lawrenceville, Georgia are made consistently and were probably mistakes by the author. Others may have been the work of copyists somewhere along the line. For example, the "Judge Morton" and the "Martin" of December 18 and 19 are obviously the same person. At some points, however, it is not clear whether the text is correct or not. The "Mr. George McGill" of December 10 may or may not be the same person as the "Mr. George McDill" of three days later. To avoid making further errors in the name of correction, the spelling of Mrs. Fife's copy has been retained here. Definite and probable corrections appear in the text in brackets the first time an error appears, and in the footnotes.

## *TRAVELS OF HENRY BRYSON*

*Decb. 1826*

Monday morning Dec. [4] 1826

On this morning about half past eight o'clock, I left Mother's in company with brother Wm. We traveled on to Pucket's Ferry on the Saluda River, 8 miles, and there we met with our brother in law, George Nickels. We three went

<sup>11</sup>Letter from Mrs. Pressley Fife of Fayetteville, Tenn., Jan. 30, 1979. I am indebted to Mrs. Fife for the use of her text of Bryson's journal as well as for other information.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

on together to the Rev. John T. Pressly's [Bryson's theological tutor] that night and stayed with him. The day was somewhat disagreeable. It rained on us from near Ligon store to the river, then some little afterwards. The weather was cold and the wind blew piercing. I rode in the gig most of the day. Expenses were nothing.

Tuesday morning. 9 o'clock. After breckfast [*sic*], here brother leaves us. He takes the road . . . on our journey for Georgia. From the Rev. J.T. Pressly's we went on to the ferry on little river, I crossed free. From there to Barksdale's ferry on Savannah River,<sup>13</sup> crossed there also free. We rode from there to Washington, Wilks [Wilkes] County, Georgia that night, we arrived there about 7 o'clock at night. Put up at Alexander's tavern, after supper, George and myself went up street to the Presbyterian Meeting-house, where we heard the Rev. Mr. [Alexander H.] Webster<sup>14</sup> preach. After service we returned to the tavern, and shortly afterwards, some person having let Mr. Webster know that there was a preacher of the presbyterian order here, he immediately called at the tavern to see me, and invited me home with him all night. Treated here very . . .ndly, early the next morning I arose and went up to the tavern and eat breckfast and started. The day was clear and pleasant. I was charged \$1.50 Nickels, \$1.75 cents. There was a revival of religion commencing here.

3. Wednesday morning we left this in company with a Mr. Smith from E. Tennessee, a Merchant, who had been at Augusta to purchase goods for to supply his store. We went through Lexinging [Lexington], a handsome little town, and proceeded on that day to a Mr. John Mayne's, four miles from Athens. Here we were very hospitably received. Had a considerably long conversation on religion. The people was of the Methodist persuasion. I was not charged anything for my night's lodging. This day was dark, foggy, cold and somewhat missty [*sic*] all

<sup>13</sup>"Barksdale's Fer." shows on a period map, near Goshen, Ga. The road Bryson probably followed ran from the ferry to Goshen and on to Washington. H. S. Tanner, "Georgia and Alabama" from *American Atlas* (Philadelphia, 1823; reprint ed., Atlanta, n.d.).

<sup>14</sup>Webster (d. 1827), formerly "a tutor in the college at Athens," came to Washington in 1823 and was also "Rector of the Academy" there. The church building was apparently completed in 1826. Eliza A. Bowen, *The Story of Wilkes County Georgia*, ed. Louise Frederick Hays (Marietta, Ga., 1950), 159-162.

day we never saw the sun during the day. We rode about 40 miles.

4. Thursday morning we went through Athens, a town of considerable size, situated on the [North Fork of the Oconee] River. Two miles beyond this we separated with Mr. Smith of Tennessee. He took the right and we the left hand towards Laurensville [Lawrenceville] in Guinette [Gwinnett] county. Passed by Pentecosts, jugtavern [now Winder], into the hog mountain road<sup>15</sup> and a way into Alen Coleman's 1½ miles below B's Mill on the Alcovy River. Stayed allnight here for nothing. This was another very dark missty and cloudy day, we never saw the sun until near night. We traveled near 57 miles. The land nothing but poor hills and nobbs, desolate looking places.

5. Friday morning. left C's at sunrise, went in by Elijah Foster's, we spoke and then went on to Mr. Morrow's on Yellow River, took breckfast and had our horses fed, charge nothing. 4 miles from here to Laurensville. We went on to Laurensville, a very flourishing little Town, here enquired for John Mills, the Blacksmyth, found him, and after a short conversation, George Nickels and I parted. We went on to find Andrew Hunter in the lower edge of Guinette, and I stopped and took dinner at the Tavern with J. Mills. After dinner, he rode out with me to Stewarts, the Silver Smiths 2 miles from town. Stopped here a short time. Then went on to Mr. Joseph Coney's 4 miles farther on Yellow Riber [sic]. The place where I was sent by order of presbytery. Here stayed all night. The day was clear and pleasant.

6th. Saturday morning. Stayed at Mr. Coney's until evening, and then went to his Son's, J.C.'s and preached that night. And notwithstanding the night was cold and the warning short, there was a considerable number assembled. I stayed at young Jos. Coney's.

7. Sabbath. This day preached to a large and respectable assemblage. The people appeared to pay good attention to sermon.

<sup>15</sup>The Hog Mountain Road "is coincident with present Georgia Highway 53, running from Winder to Watkinsville." It apparently extended to Hog Mountain near Buford in Gwinnett County. Kenneth K. Krakow, *Georgia Place-Names* (Macon, Ga., 1975), 110.

I went this night to Mr. John Weed's, about one mile from Mr. C's.

8. Monday. This morning I took my leave of these people and went on to Mr. Stewart's, the silver smith's, and took dinner and had my horse fed. I then went on to Laurensville and preached by candle light in the academy, the house was crowded with hearers and we had good order. In the village there are a male and female teacher, a Mr. [John S.] Wilson,<sup>16</sup> a presbyterian clergiman [*sic*], and a Miss Farrow are the proprietors.

Presbyterianism flourishes considerably here. The greatest number, and also the most intelligent and respectable citizens are professors of one church or other. There are also a great number of Methodists and some Baptists.

9. Tuesday. After breckfast, expenses nothing, I went down to Covington county seat in Newton. Put up with a Baptist clergyman, Mr. Hand, Thomas J. Hand. Preached in the courthouse, there was not a very great collection. There is an academy here taught by the Rev. Mr. Hand. There are a great number of professors but mostly of the Methodist order. My expenses were nothing here. Mrs. Hand's maiden name was Arrington, formerly an attendant on Mr. Loury's ministry near Louisville.

10th. Wednesday. I left Covington going a west direction, crossed Yellow River at Briant's bridge 3 miles from C. and there to the snapping sholes on South River [Snapping Shoals, east of McDonough] 7 miles to Mr. George McGill's. These sholes is the end of navigation. I stayed at Mr. McGill's this night and next day till 3 o'clock. The people here are indeed a very kind people.

The land here is tollerable good, and is selling from two to 5 dollars an acre. On this river at these sholes there is a

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<sup>16</sup>The Reverend Dr. John S. Wilson" came to Lawrenceville in 1824 and "took charge of the Lawrenceville Academy in 1826 and was its rector or superintendent for twelve years." He was pastor of Fairview Presbyterian Church and later of Goshen Church. James C. Flanigan, *History of Gwinnett County Georgia*, (2 vols. Hapeville, Ga., 1943 and 1956), I, 69.

great trap fishery for catching shad.

11. Thursday. I came up this evening to Mr. Russel's Tavern in McDonough County seat of Henry, enquired for Doctor Stokes, but he had gone out of town and was not to be in until the next day. The people of the tavern were generally peaceable, but great politicians [*sic*], and argued to late at night on the sublect [*sic*]. The land up from the snapping sholes to McDonough is indeed but poor. This town is flourishing fast, a splendid court house is near about finished.

12. Friday. I stayed at the tavern until after breakfast, then was conducted by Mr. Russel over to Stokes's boarding house but he was not at home, and I stayed there until about 12 o'clock at which time he came home. I took dinner and supper here with Stokes' and after night preached to a very small number of people. I stayed all night with Dr. Stokes. Paid nothing for my dinner and supper at Stokes' boarding house, not at the Russel's tavern.

13. Saturday. This morning I saw Mercer Babb. I started before breckfast and came down to Mr. George McDill's, preached to but a small collection of people. The place of preaching was a small distance from McDill's gate at a stand.

14. Sabbath. This day was clear and nice. A vas [*sic*] concourse of people assembled. I preached two sermons to them, the [*sic*] behaved really well, went after dinner to James Gastons one mile off.

15. Monday. It rained near all night, and after breckfast this morning, then broke off. The good people gave me nine dollars and a quarter for my labours among them. Thomas McDill, and James Gaston came with me about 15 miles. Came through a very poor part of the country part of the way, a very rich one the other. Came on by where Wm. Rodgers lives, and the Hollingsworths. The country about them is very hilly not so very rich, but from them up to near Decator [*sic*], is really good. I came on to Decator the distance of about 42 miles. There found Doc. Calhoun the first man. Put up at William's tavern, eat supper, and C. and myself went up to Mr. Lemmon's,

a member of Mr. [A.] Kirkpatrick's<sup>17</sup> church. I preached to a house crowded full and the doors also full. The people behaved well. After sermon I returned to Mr. Lemmon's, stayed all night. Saw James Stokes. Charged nothing for either my horse or self.

16. Tuesday. I left Decator in company with a young man, a mechanic, formerly from Virginia, he came with me 10 miles. I this day came through a vast tract of good country on to the Chattahoochee. Traveled a north and northeast direction all day. Crossed the Chattahoochy [sic] into the Cherokee Nation at Rodger's ferry and stayed with him all night. He was a good old Methodist and charged me nothing for a nights lodging and breckfast next morning. This, his ferry and dwelling, are about 13 miles from Laurensville, Guinette County.<sup>18</sup>

17. Wednesday. This is a fair and clear day. I took a new blazed way from this into the Alabama road one mile and a half of Blackburns on the old federal road, and after going along the Alabama road 1/2 mile, took a little road and crossed the Hightower River and went in the Tennessee road,<sup>19</sup> about

<sup>17</sup>"A Kirkpatrick" was received in Hopewell Presbytery (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) in Georgia from South Carolina Presbytery in 1826, and dismissed to South Carolina in 1829. James Stacy, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in Georgia* (Elberton, Ga., n.d.), 332.

<sup>18</sup>A Cherokee (or, more likely, part Cherokee) family named Rogers, kinsmen of the humorist Will Rogers, lived and operated a ferry on the Chattahoochee where Rogers' Bridge is now. According to Goff, the home and ferry were in Forsyth County, but a U.S. Geological Survey map (Duluth Quadrangle) shows the bridge south of the Forsyth line, crossing the river between Gwinnett and Fulton Counties just north of Duluth. John H. Goff, *Placenames of Georgia*, ed. Francis Lee Utley and Marion R. Hemperley (Athens, Ga., 1975), 458.

<sup>19</sup>A number of routes were called "the Alabama Road." Two "Federal Roads" ran to the west. This must have been the one which ran from "the present Hall-Jackson County line northwestward across the Cherokee country toward Knoxville and Nashville." *Ibid.*, 393. There is a Hightower Creek in Forsyth County, but the name is a corruption of Etowah, so this could have been the river of that name of which Hightower Creek is a tributary. Krakow, *Georgia Place-Name*, 108. An "important Cherokee route known as the Tennessee Road or Sally Hughes Trail," the latter name derived from that of "a ferry on the Etowah which was maintained by a Cherokee woman named Sally Hughes," could have taken Bryson to Tennessee. More likely, however, he followed the "Old Federal Road" (a name common to a number of roads; this one was also called the "Cherokee Federal Road of 1805") which ran from Flowery Branch, Ga. across the Cherokee lands to Tennessee. One branch led past Vann's home and Taylors, a stage stop, both of which Bryson mentioned, to Missionary Ridge and beyond. Both roads are discussed and the latter is mapped in Goff, *Placenames*, 251-252, 254n., 349-360.

27 miles from Rodger's. In this part of the road there is some of the very best of land. I saw no house but one from the time I left Rodger's till I came on the Alabama road. I went to judge Daniel's<sup>20</sup> this night. The whole distance 42 miles.

18th. Thursday. Paid 75 cents for my night's lodging. This morning my horse is foundered, and has been very sick the over night, and has beat himself very much. Traveled alone this day to judge Morton's, a large white house, the entertainment good. Paid 87½ for lodging and turnpikeage. This was a very wet day until after 12 o'clock. It then cleared off cold. 30 miles traveled. This is mountainous country.

19. Friday. I left Martin's [sic] with a sorrowful heart. My horse was so bad floundered that he could scarcely walk. I came on to Van's 15 miles, took breckfast, and had my horse fed, and paid 37½ cents. This is a splendid brick building and well finished off, outside and inside.<sup>21</sup> Came on this night to the widow Wolf's, a half breed, was well used. Whole distance traveled this day 28 miles.

20. Saturday. I paid this morning 75 cents for my supper and horse the over night. Then came on to Mr. Taylor's<sup>22</sup> 12 miles, took breckfast and had my horse fed, paid 37½ cents. In comeing [sic] here I turned off the main road about a half a mile back. These people are half breeds, or rather more so. They are remarkably friendly and sociable, much more so than I have yet seen. This river I cross here so many times is called the Sickamoga [Chickamauga]. The country is hilly and poor except on the watercourse. Here it is rich. Paid here 37½ cents for my horse fee and breckfast. Then I came on to Coody's 7 miles, stopped and stayed all night. These appear to

<sup>20</sup>Possibly R. F. ("Uncle Frank" Daniel, an early settler of Cherokee County. The surname could not have been too common in a time of such sparse white settlement. Lloyd G. Marlin, *History of Cherokee County* (Atlanta, 1932), 36, 38-39.

<sup>21</sup>Joseph Vann's fine home still stands about two miles from Chatsworth, Ga. "Rich Joe" was the wealthiest member of probably the wealthiest Cherokee family. Henry Thompson Malone, *The Cherokees of the Old South* (Athens, Ga., 1956), 1, 125, 150, 204n. Also see Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *The Chattanooga Country, 1540-1976* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1977), 68.

<sup>22</sup>A "noted public stop" near Ringgold Gap in Catoosa County. Goff, *Placenames*, 358. In 1826, however, there was probably no stage service in the area, and Taylors was probably not yet so well-known.

be very clever decent people. I truly am this night tired and nearly worn out. I feel considerably depressed in spirits. O the fortitude, perseverance, and resignation that a missionary of the cross of Christ needs. Had not God given them many great and exceeding precious promises for to rely on they would certianly shrink back from the undertaking. O the difficulties and hardships, to which they are exposed. My heart truly feels sorrowful and greatly discouraged, but O that the Lord may strengthen me, and incourage [sic] me in his work. Paid for the night 75 cents.

21. This morning paid 75 cents, my horse is very lame, can scarcely walk. I came on two and one half miles to Brainerd [Brainerd], the missionary station, and put up here for the Sabbath. Found here the Rev. Mr. [Samuel A.] Worcester<sup>23</sup> and his wife, he however was not at home and Mr. Ellsworth and his lady, he is the principle [sic] teacher of the boys and his lady is chief cook. Miss Sawyer is the principle among the girls. Mr. Veil and his lady attend to domestic affairs. Mr. Funnel a blacksmith. Mr. Blunt and his cooks. I stayed and preached once on the Sabbath.

22. Monday. My horse is very little better. This day I visited all the different rooms and classes, heard them recite, and lectured a short time to them, and sang and prayed with them and then left them. This night it snowed and your other missionary came in and they would have me to preach again to their other students. I conformed to their request.

23. Tuesday. I stayed this day until one o'clock, and then left this and went to one Mr. [Daniel] Ross's,<sup>24</sup> a white man, living

<sup>23</sup>Brainerd Mission, a mission to the Cherokees, was founded by the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions in 1817 and is the origin of the name Missionary Ridge. President Monroe visited there in 1819. Samuel Austin Worcester later became famous as the plaintiff in the celebrated battle-winning but war-losing Supreme Court case, *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), an attempt to stop Georgia from stealing lands over which the Cherokees held sovereignty. The court found for Worcester (*i.e.* the Cherokees), but as Andrew Jackson had prophesied, John Marshall was not able to enforce the decision. Stanley J. Folmsbee, Robert E. Corlew, and Enoch L. Mitchell, *Tennessee: A Short History* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1969), 152-153; and Govan and Livingood, *Chattanooga Country*, 61-64, 68.

<sup>24</sup>Daniel Ross (b. 1760 in Scotland), a trader, operated a "store on Chattanooga Creek near the foot of Lookout Mountain and operated there until about 1816." His wife was the mixed-blood daughter of another Scottish trader, John McDonald. Their son, John Ross, operated Ross's Landing, the seed of the future city of

at the lookout mountain. This day was cold and disagreeable. Ross lives 7 miles from the Missionary station. One of his black family having died, he requested of me the favour of delaying on the next day and speaking a word for them. I believing that the rest would be for my horses [*sic*] good, consented to do so. I paid for my boarding and care of my horse 2 dollars during Sabbath and Monday and part of Tuesday.

25. Wednesday. This morning is one of the coldest I have as yet experienced. As soon as breckfast was over and the coffin was finished I commenced preaching. I gave a short discourse from these words, Job. 14 Ch. 1st V. "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble."

There were several full blooded Indians, some half breeds and a number of blacks, they conducted just tollerably well. The old man Ross very ardently insisted that I should stay with him that day and night, as it was so extremely cold. I could not however, but started on my way a little after twelve o'clock. I was charged nothing for myself and horse. This was one of the coldest days I ever felt. I really thought my fortune hard, but when thinking of my dear Redeemer's difficulties, and his aples. [*sic*] and followers [*sic*] troubles to preach the gosple [*sic*] I then was perfectly easy and satisfied. Paid five cents tole gait [*sic*]. This night I traveled late after the big star was down, and never was so cold before. I came on to the Tennessee River and there stayed. Here there was a company of wicked hog-drovers. This is Vann's establishment.<sup>25</sup>

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Chattanooga, beginning in about 1815. John Ross was from 1828 until his death in 1866 the principal chief of the Cherokees. It was he who in 1820 led them to adopt a republican form of government, and later he was the leader in the struggle against removal. Gertrude McDavis Ruskin, *John Ross: Chief of an Eagle Race* (n.p., 1963), 15, 20; William T. Alderson and Robert M. McBride, eds., *Tennessee Historical Markers* (n.p., 1962), 102; Donald Davidson, *The Tennessee*, 2 vols. Vol. I: *The Old River* (New York, 1946), 148, 214, 261, 267, 272, 275; and Robert Sparks Walker, *Lookout: The Story of a Mountain* (Kingsport, Tenn., 1941), 176-177, 227-229.

<sup>25</sup>It seems likely that this commercial establishment belonged to the same Joseph Vann at whose home Bryson had had breakfast a few days earlier. Vann owned a hotel and ferry on the Chattahoochee just north of Roger's ferry, and he probably owned this one on the Tennessee, as well. It is certain that when the Cherokees lost their lands in Georgia, he moved to Hamilton County, Tennessee and lived there until 1838 when they were expelled from that state. Goff, *Placenames*, 217, 351-352, and Alderson, *et. al.*, *Historical Markers*, 94

26. Thursday. I paid one dollar for my night's lodging and passage over the Tennessee River. I then came on to Jasper C.H. 5 miles and took breckfast at Russel's tavern, paid 50 cents, and then came on to the top of Cumberland Mnt. and stayed at one Gibson's, an indifferent house of entertainment. This day I never saw the like of pigeons. At the foot of Cumb. Mt. there is a tole gait [sic] at which I paid seven pence.

27. Friday. I paid 62½ cents my mornings [sic] bill for supper, bed and horse feed. Then came on through Winchester one mile and put up at one, Mr. Benj. Dechard's,<sup>26</sup> one of the Cumberland Presbyterians, and he is a very kind man indeed. I went with him to society this night in town and there found a very pious and feeling and aparently living set of Christians. I spoke to them a short time and prayed with them. We had an interesting meeting, then came home. And Mr. Deckard [sic], knowing that I did wish to hire a horse, offered me his large mule to ride down to the people of Lyncoln [Lincoln] County. I thanked him and gladly accepted his offer. I paid nothing for the night etc.

28. Saturday. After breckfast I left here humbly riding upon a mule, yet joyful that I was so highly favored, I came on down to Fayetteville, there came in with Hugh Parkinson, an elder of Elk River congregation and he conducted me to old Mr. Taylor's an elder of the same, where we stayed all night. Here is the place assigned by Presbytery to me to visit. From about 11 miles above Fayetteville the good land commences, and continues along down here. This resembles old Kentucky.

29. Sabbath. This is a very cold windy and snowy day. I went to the meeting house preached to a considerable congregation, never scarcely suffered so much with cold in my life, after sermon, came home to Mr. Taylor's.

Monday. This is certainly the most bitter cold weather that ever I felt in all my travels. I stayed all day here, had several visitors and spent the night.

30. Tuesday. The weather this day moderates a little. I had the good fortune to get young Mr. Hamilton to undertake to

<sup>26</sup>A leading merchant in Winchester. *Goodspeed Histories*, 797.

go with the mule back and to bring down my horse. Stayed all day here again.

31. Wednesday. This is fast day. We attended church and after sermon I went home with Mr. Johnathan Anderson and stayed with him this night.

32. Thursday. This day Mr. Kidd came over for me and I went and spent this day and night with him.

33. Friday. I went home with Mr. Eli Tailor and spent this day and night.

34. Saturday. 6th Jan. 1827. I went over Elk River to Mr. Brown Parkinson's.

7th. Sabbath. This day I spoke to a respectable little society. I stayed all night here again and had the tooth ache badly. I got little or no sleep this night with it.

8. Mon. Mr. Park. and I went and got my tooth drawn out. And this day went over to his brother in law's Mr. Bingham's and stayed all night.

9. Jan. Tues. We went home to his house and then down to his brother's, Hugh, Pr. and stayed there that night.

10. Jan. Wednesday. I stayed and studied here.

11. Jan. Thurs. Mr. P. and I went down to old Mr. Leghorn's and over some land close by in that settlement. I came back home to his house that night.

12. Jan. Fri. This day studied until evenight and then went over to Stewart's and Cochern's and stayed there all night.

13. Jan. Sat. Several of us went over the river. I stayed at old Mr. Taylor's.

14. Jan. Sab. We attended sermon, at Bethel, and I returned after sermon by old Mr. Tailor's, eat dinner, and went over to Anderson's and stayed all night.

15. Jan. Mon. This morning Mr. Kidd and myself went up to the people of Head Spring and stayed all night at McAdam's.

16. Jan. Tues. We had sermon here at this place today, and then on to Mr. Carpenter's and tarried all night there. O but it is cold weather.

17. Jan. Wed. This day we start for Maury county [sic]. And landed at old Mr. Scott's.<sup>27</sup> We tarried all night with him.

18. Jan. Thurs. We went on to Mr. William Galloway's and not finding the Preacher<sup>28</sup> there we went on the tailors [sic], where I got my coat mended and paid 37½, and then came back to Wm. Galloway's, found the preacher, and tarried all night here.

19. Jan. Frid. We stayed with Mr. Galloway until after dinner, and then we went over to Mr. Matthew's esq. stayed there this night.

20. Jan. Sat. We went in company with Mr. Harris about 6. Then went on by ourselves down about 6 or 7 miles farther to old Mr. Heart's a member of Union congregation<sup>29</sup> in Maury County, we stayed all night with him.

<sup>27</sup>Probably Samuel Scott, an early (1810) settler of the area, originally from North Carolina (probably Mecklenburg County). He was one of the original ruling elders in Hopewell A.R.P. Church, not far from Bigbyville, which was founded in 1820 by the Rev. Isaac Greer. The first permanent pastor there was Robert Galloway (see below), and Bryson's son, John H. Bryson, was the pastor from 1854 to 1865 or 1866. *Centennial History*, 125-126, 493; [William Stuart Fleming], *A Historical Sketch of Maury County* (Columbia, Tenn., 1876; reprint ed., 1967), 21; and William Bruce Turner, *History of Maury County, Tennessee* (Nashville, 1955), 102, 165-166.

<sup>28</sup>Robert Millen Galloway, born in York County, S.C. on December 25, 1796. An 1820 graduate of the University of North Carolina, he was licensed that year and immediately went to Maury County where he was pastor of both Hopewell and Union Churches. Bryson later conducted his wedding (to Eliza Ann Leetch). William Galloway must have been a relative. *Centennial History*, 125-126.

<sup>29</sup>Union was in the western part of the county near Cathey's Creek on a farm owned by a Mr. Kinzer. The building was destroyed March 21, 1835 by a tornado. Turner (*Maury County*, 165) says it was never rebuilt, but according to the *Centennial History* (601) a new building was erected the following year and the organization was dissolved at some later date.

21. Jan. Sab. We attended sermon at Union. There was but a small collection of people out on this occasion. We went this evening to Mr. Faries'.
22. Mon. We came up to old Mr. Scott's and had sermon at his house. There I found my cousin James Bryson and I went with him this evening.
23. Tuesday. Mr. Kidd and Wm. Hamilton and I came on this day up to Mr. Carpenter's on the Ridge between Elk and Duck Rivers, there we met with the Rev. Mr. Galloway and J. Anderson.
24. Wednesday. We went to Head Spring and G. and myself spoke to the people. I stayed at Mr. McClain's. Rec'd  $3\frac{1}{4}$  Dollars.
25. Thurs. This day we came on down to Mr. Anderson's, and took a small rout [sic] over some land. Here we saw some of as good land as I would wish to see.
26. Friday. Anderson and Myself went to visit old Mr. Hughs, who was supposed to be lying on his death bed. He is a man well acquainted with the scriptures, and apparently a very pious man. I spent truly an agreeable day with him. This evening I went to old Mr. Taylor's.
27. Jan. Sat. After dinner Henry Taylor and myself went over Elk river [sic] to Mr. Cockern's. I stayed with him this night.
28. Sab. We attended preaching at Mr. Brown Parkinson's. There was a very large and respectful assembly here this day. I tarried here all night.
29. Mond. Several of the congregation assembled in to see me start on my mission. I left Mr. B. Parkinson's about 9 o'clock. Parkinson went with me to the Alabama line joined with the Tennessee. This day I went through a tract of rich rich country. Passed through Hazelgreen and Huntsville, nice little towns and came on to one Mr. Turner where I paid him  $87\frac{1}{2}$  cents for my nights [sic] lodging.<sup>30</sup> 33 miles.

<sup>30</sup>Bryson was on the "Meridian Road," so named because it followed a surveyor's meridian for part of its length. He would also have passed through Meridianville. Peter A. Brannon, *By-paths in Alabama* (Montgomery, 1929), 37.

30. Tues. This morning I rode on to Ditto's landing<sup>31</sup> on Tennessee River. There put up at Dr. Wily's and at 12 o'clock preached to almost the empty walls. There are a great number of people here in this little town but they are a most desperately wicked, disapated people. I had a thought of spending the day with the people of that place, but when I found that even when there was sermon at their doors they would not come to it, stood without talking and swearing, I thought it was high time for me to be traveling, therefore I put off as soon as sermon was over and I got my dinner. Dr. Wily paid my ferriage over the river. O the wickedness of man. I went this evening to a Mr. Cay's on Cumberland Mt. 8 miles from the river. 3 miles to Dr. Wily's, 8 to Cay's — 11.

31. Wed. I traveled part of this day in the edge of the Cherokee Nation. I took breckfast and had my horse fed at one Mr. Henderson's, and paid him 50 cts, and came on this night to Blountsville, preached there to a small society of well behaved people. Paid nothing for my night's lodging. 40 miles.<sup>32</sup>

1. Feb. Thurs. I left this village and crossed Big and Little Black Warrior Rivers and took breckfast at the widow Hamby's [Mrs. Gabriel Hanby] and paid her 50 cts. and came on in to Ione's [Jone's] Valley to one Mr. George Nash's,<sup>33</sup> 38 miles.

<sup>31</sup>"Old Man" John Ditto, a Pennsylvanian, was perhaps the first white resident of Madison County. He lived among the Iidians, working as a trader, at Ditto's Landing (or Cherokee-Old-Fields) near present-day Whitesburg. Edward Chambers Betts, *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama* (n.p., 1909; rev. ed., Montgomery, 1916), 6; Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (4 vols., Chicago, 1921), II, 923.

<sup>32</sup>Bryson was probably on the "Bear Meat Cabin Road" which ran south from Ditto's Landing to Blountsville (formerly called Bear Meat Cabin) and which included a fifteen mile stretch through Cherokee territory. At Blountsville it turned south and southwest to Tuscaloosa. Blount County Historical Society, *The Heritage of Blount County* (n.p., 1972; reprint ed., 1977), 18. This road and others are shown on a map, "Historic Roads and Trails," published by the Alabama Highway Department (1975).

<sup>33</sup>Col. or Gen. Gabriel Hanby of Henry County, Va. and his wife Nancy, the daughter of a Col. Nicholas of North Carolina and later of the Knoxville area, moved to Alabama in 1817 and settled "on a tract near the Polly Martin Ford on the Warrior River, just below the junction of the Little Warrior and the Blackburn Fork of the Warrior River" near today's Locust Fork. They built and operated a three-story log inn. Hanby was the Blount County representative in the constitutional convention, and he later served in the legislature. The county court met for the first