

1863 New Bethel Baptist Association Annual Minutes

A SHORT HISTORY: Held in trust by Mary Jane Neal of Woodville, Texas, these were handed down in her family for decades. John Shows Riley, his wife Delila, and five children came to Tyler County, Texas, 1854, and had eight more children. He was Mary Jane's great-grandfather and church clerk for the New Bethel Baptist Church. These records of the New Bethel Baptist Association were in his possession when he died. His wife Delila kept them, and after her passing they were kept by her daughter Jemina Ellen, Mary Jane's grandmother, and then to Ellen's youngest daughter Jimmie Ferguson, Mary Jane's mother — from mother to daughter for nearly 150 years. John S. Riley has many descendants living in the city of Woodville and Tyler County. The minutes are about 8x7 inches, addenda 8x8, data chart 8x5, and were printed on the back of wallpaper. They were transcribed by Michael G. Maness, a copy of which can be obtained at www.PreciousHeart.net/1863.pdf. The original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation were kept as close to the original as possible. The underscore “_” designates an undecipherable letter. Where some portions were illegible, several answers were obtained from other places where the names were clearer.



John S. Riley, c. 1869

Minutes of the Fourth Annual Session of the New Bethel Association with Bethany Church, Tyler County, Texas

The N. B. Association convened on the 19th, Sept. 1863 with Bethany Church, Tyler County.

Elder N. P. Johnston preached the introductory sermon from Daniel II. 44.

The association had recess for one hour, and met at half past one o'clock, p.m.: prayer, by Bro. Fancher.

The moderator called for letters, when the following were presented and read by Bro. Johnston and Rhodes, and the names of delegates enrolled, viz: Mt Vernon, Pine Ridge, Antioch, Mt Zion, Rocky Hill, Town Bluff, Bethany, Zion, Providence, New Bethel, Beech Creek, Union, Bethel and Hardin.

On motion of Bros Coatney, Pugh and Parsons were appointed a committee with the delegates of this church, to arrange preaching; and on motion, all visiting brethren of our faith and order present are invited to seats with us.

On motion of Bro. Rhodes, Bro N. P. Johnston was recognised as a delegate from Bethel church.

Corresponding letters and messengers called for, when elders Fancher, Bean and Masterson were received from Bethlehem association, and the right of fellowship extended.

On motion the following committees were appointed, viz: on business Bros. Williamson, Coatney and Phelps on finance, Bros Johnston, Milner and Rhodes; on education Bros Clark, Perry and Richardson; one books and periodicals, Bros Martin, Johnston and Jordan; on sabbath-schools, Williamson, Richardson and Rhodes; on temperance, Johnston, Rhodes, and Jordan.

The committee to arrange preaching made the following report: Bro Fancher to preach at 11 o'clock to-morrow, Williamson to close; John Bean at 2 o'clock, Martin to close; Masterson at candlelight, and Rhodes to close. On motion adjourned until Monday morning 8 o'clock; prayer by elder John Bean.

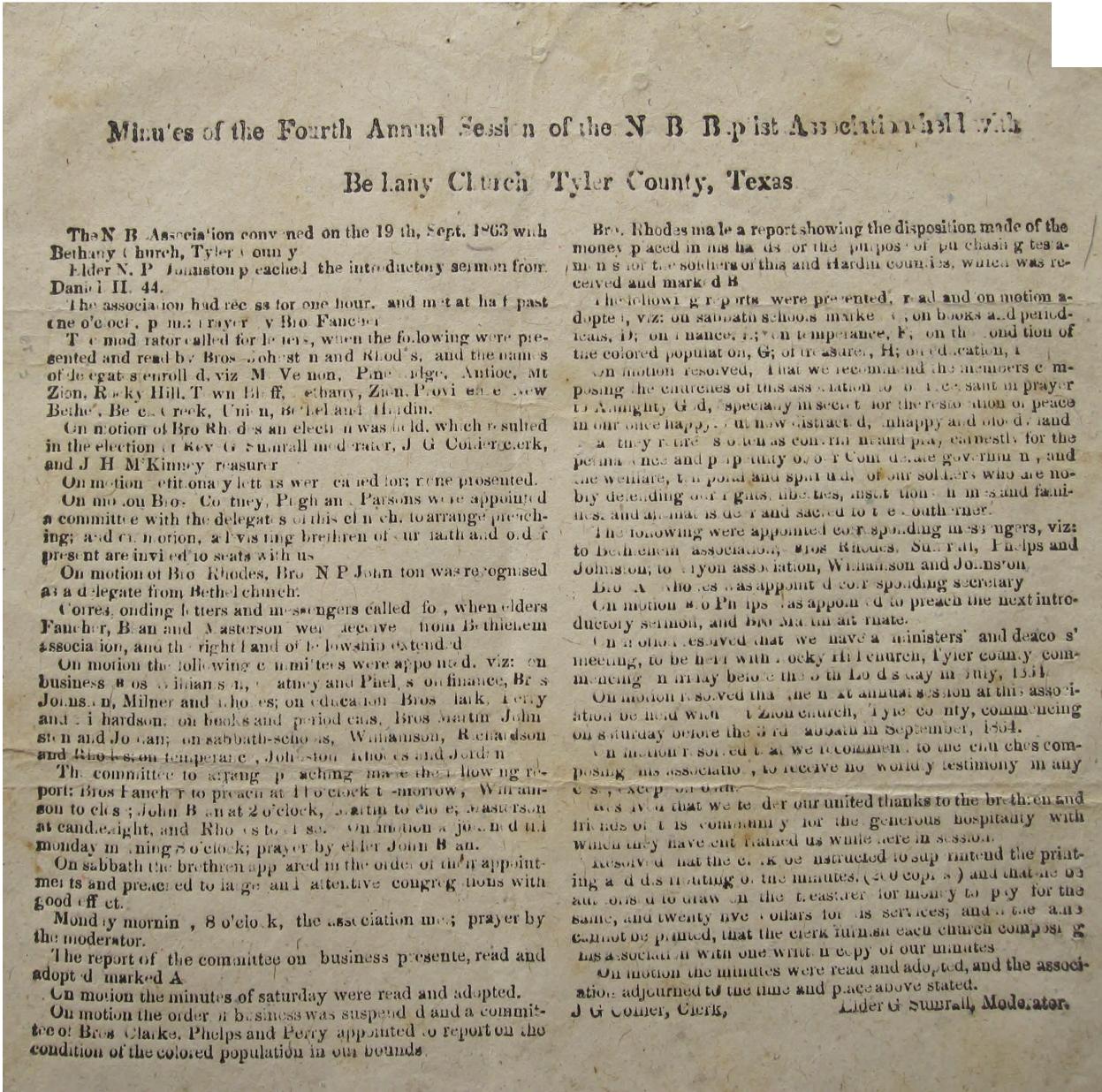
On Sabbath the brethren appeared in the order of their appointments and preached to large and attentive congregations with good effect.

Monday morning, 8 o'clock, the association met; prayer by the moderator.

The report of the committee on business presente, read and adopted marked A.

On motion the minutes of Saturday were read and adopted.

On motion the order of business was suspended and a committee of Bros Clarke, Phelps and Perry appointed to report on the condition of the colored population in our bounds.



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On motion of Bro Rhodes an election was held, which resulted in the election of Rev. G. Sumrall moderator, J. G. Comer, clerk, and J. H. McKinney treasurer.

On motion of Bro. Rhodes, Bro N. P. Johnston was recognised as a delegate from Bethel church.

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On motion the minutes of Saturday were read and adopted.

On motion the order of business was suspended and a committee of Bros Clarke, Phelps and Perry appointed to report on the condition of the colored population in our bounds.

Bro. Rhodes made a report showing the disposition made of the money placed in his hands for the purpose of purchasing testaments for the soldiers of this and Hardin counties, which was received and marked B.

The following reports were presented, read and on motion adopted, viz: on sabbath schools marked C; on books and periodicals, D; on finance, E; on temperance, F; on the condition of the colored population, G; of treasure, H; on education, I.

On motion resolved, that we recommend the members composing the churches of this association to be incessant in prayer to Almighty God, especially in secret for the restoration of peace in our once happy, but now distracted, unhappy and bloody land — a they render so ten as concerning and pray earnestly for the permanence and perpetuity of our Confederate government, and the welfare, temporal and spiritual, of our soldiers who are nobly defending our rights, liberties, institutions, families, and animals dear and sacred to the southerner.

The following were appointed corresponding messengers, viz: to Bethlehem association, Bros Rhodes, Sumrall, Phelps and Johnston; to Tryon association, Williamson and Johnston.

Bro A. Rhodes was appointed corresponding secretary. Bro A. Phelps was appointed to preach the next introductory sermon, and Bro Martin alternate.

On motion resolved that we have a ministers' and deacons' meeting, to be held with Rocky Hill church, Tyler county commencing on Monday before the 5th Lord's day in July, 1864.

On motion resolved that the next annual session at this association be held with Mt Zion church, Tyler county, commencing on Saturday before the 3rd Sabbath in September, 1864.

On motion resolved that we recommend to the churches composing this association, to receive no worldly testimony in any case, except on oath.

Resolved that we tender our united thanks to the brethren and friends of this community for the generous hospitality with which they have entertained us while here in session.

Resolved that the clerk be instructed to superintend the printing and distributing of the minutes, (200 copies) and that he be authorised to draw on the treasurer for money to pay for the same, and twenty five dollars for his services; and if the same cannot be printed, that the clerk furnish each church composing this association with one written copy of our minutes.

On motion the minutes were read and adopted, and the association adjourned to the time and place above stated.

J. G. Comer, Clerk, Elder G. Sumrall, Moderator.

1863 Addenda to Minutes

A

We your committee on business beg leave to report as follows: 1st, call the roll and mark absentees; 2d, read decorum; 3d, read and correct, if necessary, the minutes of saturday; 4th, call for reports; 5th, call for miscellaneous business; 6th, make appointments; 7th, read, correct, if necessary, and adopt the minutes; all of which is respectfully submitted. J D Phelps, chairman.

B

Dear brethren, I beg leave to report that the money you placed in my hands to purchase testaments, was sent on a cording to your instructions, and I have never heard from it since.

Yours respectfully, A Rhodes

C

Your committee on sabbath schools beg leave to report that they have had the same under consideration and are sorry to say that so far as our knowledge is concerned, we know of but little that has been done during this associational year, partly on account of suitable books; but we would earnestly recommend to the churches and brethren to take some speedy steps to keep alive and in motion this glorious enterprise, so that when our children grow up, it may be said to them, "from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

A Rhodes, ch.

D

We your committee on books and periodicals beg leave to make the same report that was made at our last setting; namely, that whereas the present war has to a great extent deprived us of periodicals and the power of obtaining books, therefore we do cordially recommend the repeated and careful perusal of the Bible, the best of books; and we do from the great depth of our hearts, thank Almighty God for the privilege of reading such a Book.

S. C. Martin, ch.

E

Your committee on finance beg leave to report as follows: amount sent by Bethel church, \$3.00; Beech Creek, 12.00; Bethany, 9.00; New Bethel, 8.25; Pine Ridge, 12.00; Mt Zion, 8.00; Mt Vernon, 22.00; Town Bluff, 18.10; Rocky Hill, 4.00; Union, 11.10; Hardin, 5.00; Zion, 3.00; Antioch, 3.00; Providence, 10.00; making total sent by the churches for missionary purposes and printing minutes, \$135.45. Respectfully submitted, N P Johnston, ch.

F

Your committee on temperance would beg leave to report that in our opinion, the practice of intemperance among church members is one of the worst sins; therefore we would recommend to the churches that they act strictly in this matter, and when any member shall debase himself so low as to become drunken, that he should be cut off from the church.

A Rhodes, ch.

G

We your committee appointed to report on the condition of the colored population, beg leave to report as follows, to-wit: that the religious condition of this class of our population is truly encouraging, and at most of the churches there is ample preparation made for them to be comfortably situated to hear the Gospel; and where it is not the case, we do earnestly recommend that such preparation should be made.

We also recommend the following resolution, viz: that all owners of slaves be earnestly requested to either go themselves or get some one suitable to go with them to divine worship and see to their good behavior, and when services close, that they be instructed to return to their respective homes without delay; and that our ministers be requested in their instructions, to teach the slaves that their relations are of divine appointment, and that the Bible makes their fidelity as servants, a test of the genuineness of their christian character. All of which is respectfully submitted.

L G Clark, ch.

H

Amount rec'd from Bro M'Queen, former treasurer	10.00
" " " " J G Coiler " "	.30
" " " " Finance committee,	127.45
Total amount in hand	\$137.75

J H M'Kinney, treasurer.

I

The committee on education submit the following report: In the opinion of your committee, this association is now to work to engage in any practical educational undertaking. We believe it to be the duty of the association to expend every dollar she can raise for domestic missions; thereby increasing her own resources; for we feel that in a few years, when our whole field shall be dotted over with churches, the money which is so freely flowing from our treasury will be returned to us fourfold.

Therefore, as strong and earnest friends of education, we can conceive of no plan, the better to encourage and hasten the day when we can, as an association, engage in any practical and important work, than to push forward the cause of domestic missions. This subject being one of the greatest importance, we would urge upon the association the propriety of annually appointing a committee to report upon it, so that it may be kept constantly before the minds of the brethren; and they will then be prepared to act with due energy when the time arrives that we may deem ourselves able to engage in this great cause.

There is one branch of education which is certainly in the reach of church in our limits; we allude to sabbath school education. It is truly to be hoped that every church will give us, at our next meeting, an account of flourishing sabbath schools under their control. We notice this for this express purpose; we heartily recommend the churches, in buying books for sabbath schools, to confine themselves strictly to baptist publications. In conclusion, your committee would beg leave to recommend to the brethren, as worthy of their highest confidence and liberal patronage, the baptist college at Independence, under the control of our deeply pious and well beloved brother Burleson. Your committee further beg leave to recommend to their brethren the propriety of establishing a Baptist Female School at some suitable location within the limits of this associational district.

L G Clark, ch.

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Back of 1863 Minutes

measuring about 8x7 inches - wallpaper was used because of paper shortage during U.S. Civil War

STATISTICAL TABLE.

Churches	Counties	Post Offices	Names of Delegates	Pastors	Baptised	Recd by letter	Dismissed	Expelled	Restored	Dead	In Fellowship
Antioch	Tyler	Woodville	D. L. Burk	N. P. Johnston	5	2	6				12
Bethel	"	"	A Rhodes, N. P. Johnston	N. P. Johnston	2	2	6				20
Bethany	"	"	J. H. McKinney, L. G. Clark	"							13
Beech Creek	"	"	S. C. Martin, J. G. Collier, T. Collier	J. D. Phelps	6	1	2	3			19
Big Sandy	Polk	Morganville	William Word	J. D. Phelps	3	1	2	1			21
Hardin	Hardin	Hardin	Coatney	D. C. Williamson	2	1	2			4	32
Mt. Vernon	Trinity	Moscow	G. Sumrall, A. Richardson, L. Pugh	G. Sumrall	5	2		1	1	4	43
Mt. Zion	Tyler	Peachtree Village	J. Faircloth, P. Williams	S. C. Martin	7	4	2		1	2	51
New Bethel	"	Woodville	D. C. Williamson, C. Parsons, A. F. Perry	D. C. Williamson	2	3				2	12
Pine Ridge	Polk	Moscow	D. M. Jordan	J. D. Phelps				1		3	41
Providence	Hardin	Providence Hill	B. Bass, I. S. Humble	S. C. Martin	4	1			2	5	20
Rocky Hill	Tyler	Woodville	J. H. Milner	A. Rhodes	1				1	1	23
Town Bluff	"	Town Bluff	B. Bentley	S. C. Martin		1	5	3		3	9
Union	"	Woodville	J. D. Phelps	J. D. Phelps	1						22
Zion	Hardin	Caney Head									
Totals					33	16	19	9	5	20	338



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Big Sandy	Polk	Morganville	William Word	J. D. Phelps	3	1	2	1			21
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Mt. Zion	Tyler	Peachtree Village	J. Faircloth, P. Williams	S. C. Martin	7	4	2		1	2	51
Pine Ridge	Polk	Moscow	D. C. Williamson, C. Parsons, A. F. Perry	D. C. Williamson	2	3				2	12
Providence	Hardin	Providence Hill	D. M. Jordan	J. D. Phelps				1		3	41
Rocky Hill	Tyler	Woodville	B. Bass, I. S. Humble	S. C. Martin	4	1			2	5	20
Town Bluff	"	Town Bluff	J. H. Milner	A. Rhodes	1				1	1	23
Union	"	Woodville	B. Bentley	S. C. Martin		1	5	3		3	9
Zion	Hardin	Caney Head	J. D. Phelps	J. D. Phelps	1						22
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