

Assemblies of God
HERITAGETM

CONCLUDING PART

When
Pentecost
Came to
Alabama

By R.H. Spence

At right, early Alabama
preacher Edward B.
Brooks and his son
Homer, 1913.



Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 1984-85

From *The American Magazine*, June 1939

DRAWING BY
MAC SHEPARD

NILE *mother*



Lillian Trasher
at Assiout, 1938.
Photo by Jerome
Beatty

They call her the greatest woman in Egypt—this big-hearted American who looks like Marie Dressler and is "Mamma" to 700 orphans and widows

by
J E R O M E / B E A T T Y

Egypt is a land of wonders, but to me its greatest is Miss Lillian Trasher, huge and hearty, once of Jacksonville, Fla., mother to 647 Egyptian orphans and 74 penniless widows. At Assiout, Egypt, she conducts one of the most amazing open houses in the world. No deserving child or widow has ever been turned away.

The mystery of the Sphinx is a child's

Continued on page 3

THE HERITAGE

LETTER *Wayne Warner*

As you have already noticed, this issue of *Heritage* is taking a close look at an Assemblies of God legend and one of the great women of this century, Lillian Trasher (1887-1961).

Miss Trasher's orphanage at Assiout, Egypt, which is now called the Lillian Trasher Memorial Orphanage, will be 74 years old on February 10. On that day in 1911, Lillian took a tiny baby girl into her home. The baby's mother had just died, and the father was unable to take care of the waif.

With what Lillian understood to be a mandate from God, an orphanage was established which continues to this day as a haven for orphans and widows.

You'll enjoy Jerome Beatty's classic story, "Nile Mother," which we are reprinting from the June 1939 issue of *The American Magazine*. One of Lillian's faithful helpers — and there were many — Philip Crouch, has also written a story for this issue.

Philip and Hazel Crouch served with Lillian Trasher at the Assiout Orphanage, 1948-55. Crouch became a third-generation missionary in his family to serve in Egypt when he was appointed in 1937. His grandparents, Frank and Agnes Crouch, left their Iowa farm in 1912 and took four of their children to Egypt. Included in that group were Mr. and Mrs. John Crouch; Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Crouch (Philip's parents); Mr. and Mrs. Hugh M. Cadwalder; James Crouch; and Henrietta Robertson.

The only living members of that 1912 group are Mary Crouch Cadwalder, 91, Houston, Texas, and her brother James Crouch, 82, Springfield, Missouri.

After completing his studies at Central Bible College in 1937, Philip Crouch joined his parents in Egypt. The next year Miss Hazel Conway received missionary appointment. They were married in Egypt and continued under missionary appointment until 1955. In 1963 Crouch was named president of Central Bible College, serving until 1980. He is now vice president of Trinity Broadcasting Network, Tustin, California.



Wayne E. Warner is Director of the A/G Archives



A crowd of 300 welcomed Lillian Trasher to Springfield, Missouri, in January 1955. The visit was her first to the United States in 25 years. Included in the welcoming party above are (left to right) Bert and Charlotte Webb; Ralph Riggs, then general superintendent; Miss Trasher; J.O. Savell; Mrs. Andrew Crouch (in front); Mrs. George Carmichael; and Noel Perkin, then missionary secretary.

Here in the Archives we have preserved materials that help tell the story of Lillian Trasher's long and dedicated ministry.

One of the items which we treasure is Lillian's own scrapbook of her visit to the U.S. in 1955. It is filled with photographs, post cards, newspaper features, telegrams, and other memorabilia.

I vividly recall that visit because I was stationed at Ft. Lewis, Washington, and Lillian spoke at our church, First Assembly in Tacoma, which at that time was pastored by Everett Ewing.

Since I was not reared in the Assemblies of God, I had no idea who Mamma Lillian was or what she had accomplished in faraway Egypt. The only thing I knew about Egypt was that Gamal Abdel Nasser was threatening to invade Israel and that could affect my approaching discharge from the army.

People were buzzing with excitement, so I knew I could not afford to miss hearing Lillian Trasher. As it turned out, it was one of the most memorable missionary services I ever attended.

Some friends and I left the Christian Servicemens Center on Pacific Avenue in what we thought was plenty of time for the evening service. But when we arrived at the old brick building, which was then located at 12th and G Streets, we saw that almost every seat was taken. My friends and I had to squeeze into some of the last remaining balcony seats.

I don't remember anything about the

preliminaries. But I do remember Mamma.

She held everyone's attention as she waited on the platform for the introduction and then as she began to tell of her precious babies at Assiout.

Mamma Lillian had been away from her babies for 10 weeks when I heard her that night in Tacoma. And we just knew she would rather be at Assiout than criss-crossing the country on her first furlough in 25 years.

Yet you couldn't help but notice that she loved to tell the story of God's work

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ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HERITAGE

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Persons wishing to donate historical materials such as correspondence, photographs, tapes, films, magazines, books, minutes, etc., are urged to write to the Archives at the above address.

Wayne E. Warner, Editor

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NILE mother

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card trick compared to the mystery of how, singlehanded, she has raised more than \$370,000 in the last 28 years to create and build a huge institution and to educate, feed, and clothe the poor and friendless from the trash piles of Egypt.

Miss Trasher reminds you of the late Marie Dressler in her merriest moments, except that she's younger and a little larger.

"I'm about five feet, ten inches tall," she told me, laughing, "but don't you dare ask how much I weigh." Two hundred and twenty-five pounds would be a good guess.

She is fifty-one, her hair is gray, her skin is clear and browned by the desert winds. She has a lovely, friendly face, and when she arrived from America at the age of twenty-three she was known as the prettiest girl in Upper Egypt. She has a small staff, all natives but one, and performs with untiring vigor the duties of a money-raising crew, a hotelkeeper, a school principal, and two or three hundred mothers.

Recently three of her youngest died in one night at the American Mission hospital during an epidemic of dysentery. She was inconsolable. "My babies are gone!" she groaned.

A doctor pleaded, "But, Miss Lillian, you have hundreds more."

She lifted a tear-stained face. "Yes," she said, "but I can't spare even one."

Missionaries are reputed to be jealous folks. But throughout Egypt those of various sects agreed, "Miss Lillian is the

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This classic story first appeared in *The American Magazine* (June 1939). It was reprinted in *Reader's Digest*, in Beatty's book *Americans All Over*, and in a booklet published by the Assemblies of God. An editor's note accompanied the original story: "Mr. Beatty has been circling the globe to meet Americans who are living important lives in faraway lands. Here is one whose work, you will agree, is a magnificent adventure."

Used by permission.



Left: Lillian Trasher (left) and her sister Jennie in 1910, leaving for Egypt the first time.

Below: Lillian and at least 20 children in a Model T, February 1928.

Author Jerome Beatty

Photos by the late Jerome Beatty used in this issue courtesy of Jerome Beatty, Jr., Waquoit, Massachusetts.

After the well-known journalist Jerome Beatty attended a chapel service and saw the orphans and widows stand to sing, he wrote, "A lump comes in your throat and you blink back tears."

Photo by Jerome Beatty



greatest woman in Egypt."

Assiout is a city of 60,000, away up south on the Nile, 235 miles from Cairo. Miss Lillian's charges are from all over Egypt. Some come as babies and stay until they are married or get jobs. They're generally sought after because they make good wives and intelligent workers. The smartest boys over in the missionary college are usually those Miss Trasher has reared, and whose school expenses, somehow, she manages to dig up.

The orphanage is home, and the boys come back when they lose their jobs, the girls return to have their babies there. Assisted by a native midwife, Miss Trasher has delivered hundreds of babies, children of girls she has reared and whose marriages she has helped to arrange. Most of the girl babies are promptly named "Lillian."

The orphanage buildings are across the Nile bridge, scattered along a smelly and mosquito-breeding irrigation canal, crowded among huts of mud bricks or cornstalks.

In winter, Luxor-bound tourist boats from Cairo steam up the Nile past Assiout and passengers, who have paid \$350 for the comfortable journey, look across the river, as the boat goes through the locks in the barrage, and see the orphanage buildings. If they could tear themselves from the jazz and cocktails they could drive over there in a few minutes and see how Miss Trasher's tight and practical economy clothes, feeds, and educates a child and turns him out a good Christian (usually) for about 10 cents a day; and how \$350 would run her orphanage for five days, or keep one child for more than nine years.

One man did that very thing. He was a British lord on a holiday, and as a result of his visit he has given Miss Trasher more than \$35,000, insisting that he remain anonymous. He is by far her most generous contributor.

Jittery and embarrassed by her ignorance of the conventions, after she had shown him the orphanage she stammered, "I — I — hope I haven't said anything I shouldn't. I mean, I don't know how to address nobility."

"My dear lady," he smiled, "address me any way you like. Any titles I may have shrink to insignificance before the nobility of your character and your work."

Which fussed her more than ever.

Miss Trasher is an orphan now herself. Her father was manager of an asphalt paving company in Florida. Her mother was educated at Vassar. Lillian Trasher was a devout church member, interested particularly in children, and when she was graduated from high school she vol-

unteered as a worker in an orphanage in Marion, N.C., where she learned about the care and feeding of infants and how to cut and sew children's clothes. Later she studied in Bible schools, spoke at church meetings, and met a Holiness missionary from Assiout who told her that if she would pay all her expenses she could go there and preach to the heathen.

To preach in Egypt! What an opportunity! A Florida girl of twenty-three would turn Mohammedans into Christians!

Her parents protested, refused to give her money, but she eventually collected enough, dollar by dollar, from church people and set sail. Her older sister went along as a volunteer chaperon, expecting that Lillian would have enough of Egypt in a few weeks and give up and come home. That was in 1910. She hasn't given up yet, and has gone home only on a few not-too-successful money-raising excursions.

She had to live in vile surroundings, accustom herself to bad food and water. She was terribly homesick. She had to preach through an interpreter. Her associ-

"The buildings are well built, but the architecture is Egypto-Trasher catch-as-catch-can, for Miss Lillian has added a room here and there, whenever she has had the money."

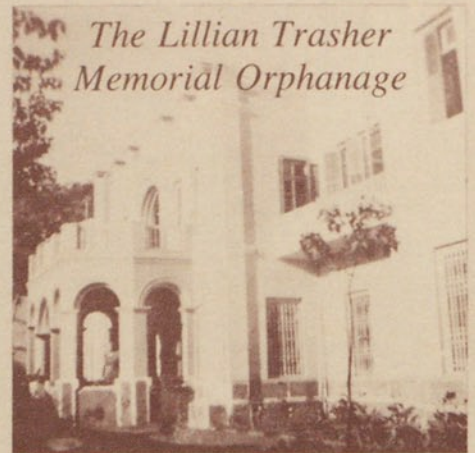
ates felt sorry for her, were sure she would die of some African disease, and begged her to go. She wouldn't budge.

Lillian Trasher was sure there was something she could do. She started to learn Arabic, she visited the sick, fed the hungry as well as she could with the little money that came from her friends in America. She was in constant danger of being attacked by Arabs, who often spat at her and yelled obscenities as she passed through the narrow streets. Her sister stayed close beside her for two years, otherwise her charitable adventure might have had a tragic end.

She has never known fear. A few years ago, in front of the orphanage one night, there was a terrific fight as four hijackers attacked a hashish smuggler who, with his wife and baby, was going by donkey into the interior to peddle the dope. Miss Lillian leaped into the battle, scolding the flashing knives, kicking, whacking, yelling in Arabic. She chased the hijackers away, got the woman and her baby into the orphanage, called the police, who carted off the body of the smuggler, who had been slashed to death in the fray. The

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UPDATE



The Lillian Trasher Memorial Orphanage

It has been more than 45 years since the well-known journalist Jerome Beatty let the world know about Mamma Lillian Trasher and her Assiout Orphanage through his classic "Nile Mother." At least three books have been written about Lillian's work since Beatty's widely circulated story was first published.

Two months before her death in 1961 at the age of 74 Mamma Lillian looked back on 51 years of service in Egypt. She regarded it as "a chance to make over broken lives... of loving dying babies back to life."

The work Mamma Lillian started in 1911 continues with the same compassionate service under the leadership of George Assad, who himself was reared at the orphanage. Working with the director and his staff is Bernice Wheeler, an Assemblies of God missionary.

The Lillian Trasher Memorial Orphanage now takes care of 650 children, widows, and blind women. This big family lives on the 12 acres which the orphanage owns. There are 13 main buildings, including a church, school, dining hall, bakery, storerooms, clinic, offices, and power plant. In addition, there are workshops for carpentry, sewing, and knitting, and swimming pools and playgrounds for recreation.

Director Assad is confident that Mamma Lillian Trasher's work will continue to thrive as long as it operates with faith, hope, and love. "We will serve the same God, and He never changes."

The Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions has produced a book *Letters from Lillian*, which is a collection of Lillian's prayer letters and photographs of the orphanage ministry. It is available for a missionary offering by writing to the Division of Foreign Missions, 1445 Boonville Avenue, Springfield, Missouri 65802.



This book is available for a gift to foreign missions. See above.

woman and her child are still in the orphanage.

Four months after she arrived in Assiout, Miss Lillian found her niche. A sick woman whom she had been nursing died, leaving a baby of three months, with a penniless father. She took the baby home and gave it its first bath. Recalling her work in the South Carolina orphanage, she got her big idea. The Assiout Orphanage was under way. Had she had some large church organization back of her it might have been easy. But she was on her own. Her friends told her she could never get enough money from America to keep going.

"If I can't," she said, "I'll collect from the Egyptians."

That, everybody said, was ridiculous, particularly for an American girl.

"An American girl can do anything, if she tries hard enough," she said, and went out into the street and met an Egyptian messenger, told him what she was doing, and asked for money. He gave her 35 cents. It happened that he was sick and, following the Egyptian belief, thought if he gave to the poor he'd get well more quickly. The next day he was feeling fine. So began the conviction, now widespread in Assiout that God takes good care of those who give liberally to the orphanage.

At first Miss Trasher had only six or eight children. The natives suspected that she was gathering them to be taken as slaves to America. They had never heard of an orphanage. Orphans got along as best they could. The babies often died, since they belonged to no one, who cared? The older ones lodged with relatives, received no education, slept on dirt floors, snatching what food they could, sometimes clothing themselves through petty thievery. They grew up to be the riffraff of the towns. The girls had trouble finding husbands, the boys couldn't find jobs.

But the government of Assiout began to take an interest in Miss Lillian, and with official approval her work grew. When money didn't come from America, and Assiout had been pretty well solicited, she would make long trips on donkeys to collect money, chickens, vegetables, and wheat from the villagers, riding astride in her cotton dress, a curious sight to behold. The police helped her and allowed her to sleep in police stations.

Even the governor of the Sudan heard of her and sent from far-off Khartoum a young mother and her illegitimate child, to save their lives. Both, as is the general custom, would have been poisoned or their throats cut by righteous relatives, their bodies secretly buried, and, bowing to public opinion, the police would have asked no questions. Many such mothers



Mamma Lillian (center) leads praise at baptismal service in 1950s. During her 50 years in Egypt she took care of more than 8,000 orphans and widows.

seek haven with Miss Lillian. She has children of lepers, too, taken from their parents before they contract the disease.

One ragged mother, with a bullet in her shoulder, was brought in with her three daughters, one a baby two days old. Her husband had shot her because she had borne him no son. The mother and children are still there. The husband has just been released from jail.

"What if he comes over here looking for his wife?" I asked Miss Lillian.

"I'll chase the rascal clear across the Nile," she said firmly. And she would, too.

After five years Miss Lillian had nearly 50 children, fortunately some of them old enough to help her with the little ones. When she began to take in widows their assistance was invaluable. Neighbors, with some reason, began to complain of the noise, and, though folks warned her she'd be murdered and her place looted, she bought land outside the city, across the Nile, and built a house of mud bricks and plaster.

So began the orphanage as it stands today. After a while, needing more room and rest, she built herself a tiny place a

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THE HERITAGE

LETTER Wayne Warner

Continued from page 2

in the orphanage He had chosen her to build. It was her opportunity to tell people coast to coast how their faithfulness had helped thousands of orphans for more than 4 decades.

We went out of First Assembly and down the steep streets of Tacoma that night with much to think about. The snow on the ground and the icy wind blowing off the Puget Sound were hardly noticed.

We had been in a holy place and had heard, as Philip Crouch called Lillian, "a legend in her time."

That 1955 itinerary was an unusual experience for missionaries in that day. Mamma Lillian traveled all over the country, during the 9 months she was home. The night we heard her in Tacoma, people in Rapid City, South Dakota, had heard her that morning.

Mamma Lillian raised \$60,917.99 in offerings during her itinerary in 1955. It doesn't seem like much today, but that

was 30 years ago when \$100 a week was a pretty fair income.

The late David Irwin, who worked with Miss Trasher during her last few years, remembered how she returned to the orphanage and told the staff how sick she had been in Detroit and how worried she was that she would die and be buried in the U.S. rather than at Assiout.

She made certain that she would be buried in the land of her calling. Her death came at Assiout, December 17, 1961. ❖



Lillian Trasher leaving Colorado Springs during her whirlwind furlough in 1955.

block away where she could be alone at night. She didn't sleep a wink the first night, and the next day moved the littlest babies up with her, so that she could be sure they were taken care of when they cried.

There are a dozen buildings, large and small, scattered up and down the canal wherever Miss Lillian could buy a site cheap. They are well built, but the architecture is Egypto-Trasher catch-as-catch-can, for Miss Lillian has added a room here and there, whenever she has had the money.

There is a church which, a tight fit, holds all of Miss Trasher's widows and children, except the forty or fifty tiny ones. When they all stand and sing, a lump comes in your throat and you blink back tears. Seven hundred and twenty-one — there may be 750 by now — fed, clothed, and educated by one lone woman. "An American girl can do anything if she tries hard enough," she had said. And there's her proof.

Until 1933 the orphanage was open to Christians and Moslems alike. In that year Mohammedans in Egypt turned against missionaries who were working with Moslem youngsters, trying to bring them up in Christian ways. They started to build Moslem orphanages, and one day officers came and took away the 75 Mohammedans. Great was the wailing. They didn't want to go. But law is law.

About midnight the telephone bell rang. Miss Trasher was up, still grieving. "Please, Miss Trasher," a police official begged, "will you come over here and try to quiet these children? They won't stop yelling for Mamma."

She went over and quieted them, and returned, day after day, until they were settled in their new home.

It is not correct to say that the officers took *all* the Moslems. There was one six-year-old girl, blind, with a crooked leg and a twisted arm, who had been there from babyhood. "You can keep her," said an officer, thinking he was playing a grim joke on Miss Trasher.

"Thank you," she said, and meant it, for, of all the children, that was the one who needed most her care, therefore the one she would have chosen to keep.

One of her first charges said one day, "Miss Lillian, why can't we call you Mamma?" She blushed when she told me about it. "Perhaps it's silly," she apologized, "but I love it." So they all call her "Mamma." One day, in her home, she was getting a telephone connection for me. She asked for the number, handed me the receiver. I heard the operator, a man, say, "All right, Mamma." He had been one of her boys.

A boy of eight was admitted to the orphanage when his father was sent to

jail. The boy was happy, and once a week an older child took him to see his father. The boy begged Miss Trasher to go with him sometime. He had been telling his father how good she had been, and his father wanted to thank her. So she went. The jailer opened the door; ahead was a row of cells holding dozens of dirty, bearded Egyptian criminals. The boy dragged her along, waved at a shaggy black face pressed against the bars far down the corridor, and cried happily, "Papa! Look! Here's Mamma!"

The orphanage is affiliated with the Assemblies of God, a comparatively small American church organization quite active in foreign missions, and through this Miss Lillian collects funds in the

was given her by admiring Egyptian women. She drives it very slowly, honking constantly, whether there's danger ahead or not, waving at friends, chattering a blue streak, never shifting gears, and blaming the gasoline when the car bucks as she slows down to two miles an hour to nose her way through a herd of goats.

Folks who say that some missionaries live better and work less than charity workers at home don't mean Miss Lillian. She's up at sunrise and working furiously until ten at night. Her shoes are worn, her clothing is simple, her house, part of which is a nursery, is so small that her office is in her bedroom.



On the left Lillian poses for author Jerome Beatty with three young men who were reared in the orphanage; a baby can be seen at the lower right. On the right, Lillian takes time out with pets at the orphanage. Photos by Jerome Beatty.

United States — her own salary of \$40 a month and from \$150 to \$250 a month from church members. She needs \$2,000 a month to run the place, and most of it has to come from the people who know her best, the Christian Egyptians.

She never has had an endowment, won't go into debt, and lives from hand to mouth. Sometimes there isn't another grain of wheat for tomorrow's breakfast, but something always turns up. Miss Trasher believes that prayer brings the money, discounting the fact that everybody in Assiout loves her, that she is a welcome guest in the homes of the richest and poorest, and that when she goes to town with a glint in her eye folks know they'd better dig up the piasters and the pounds. She gets many contributions of food, grain, and sometimes meat. One man gives a barber \$20 worth of wheat a year to keep the boys' hair clipped.

No longer does Miss Lillian have to ride a donkey or a bicycle to make her collections, nor for trips to markets, where, known as the closest buyer in Assiout, she bargains furiously with the Arabs. She has an American car which

One of her friends told me of hearing Miss Lillian at prayer. She was in her tiny living room with Fize Fam, a fine young Egyptian who was reared in the orphanage and who, like many others, married a fellow orphan. Now he is her first assistant and head of the boys' school. They had just discovered that they couldn't quite meet the pay roll, which is \$225 a month, and Miss Lillian was going to town to see what she could do.

"Please, Lord," Miss Lillian prayed, "surely if I do the work here You can take care of the money. Please send us \$200 today."

"Why not ask abundantly?" said Fize, who keeps the books. "We need lentils and beans and clothing for the boys."

"Lord," Miss Lillian amended her prayer, "please send \$300."

Fize brought her hat and coat. "Why not \$500?" he suggested.

She lifted her face and said, "Well, Lord, You do whatever You think is right."

On her way to town she met the mailman. There was a letter from an American, containing a check for \$1,000. ♦

Why They Called Her the Greatest Woman in Egypt

What I Remember About Mamma Lillian Trasher

by Philip Crouch

When I think about Lillian Trasher, I am reminded that she was a great woman — both in spirit and body. She stood more than 6 feet tall and weighed more than 200 pounds.

She was never bothered by her size, using it to great advantage in crowds or on the streets. In Egypt people would often recognize her and offer gifts for her famous orphanage.

Mamma Lillian had great faith, and stories abound how the Lord supplied food, clothing, and housing for her great family which numbered 1,200 when we were there.

I remember one incident concerning the need for a hospital, or an isolation center. She went out one day and decided where the hospital should be built. She then proceeded to step it off, drew a simple plan, and sent for the builders.

At this point I asked her about the costs and whether we had the money. (I knew very well we didn't have the money.) She looked at me with utter honesty and simplicity and said, "Philip, we don't have the money, but the Lord will provide. If I

She was a woman of great faith, commitment, determination, compassion... a legend in her time.

had waited until I had the money to build the buildings that are here, we would have never had a building on these grounds. He has never failed me."

So it was. The building was started, the bricks were ordered, the walls went up, and we never stopped to wait for money to complete the project.

Lillian Trasher was a woman of great commitment. In the early years of her missionary career she had returned only occasionally to America.

When we arrived to help we learned she had not taken a furlough since 1929. This commitment had taken her through the Great Depression, insurrections, World War II, plagues, and hardships of many kinds — yet she had continued her labors in Assiout.

After we had been with her for a few years, she said, "Now that I have some help I can take a furlough."

So when she finally took a furlough in December 1954, it had been 25 years since she had been in America. (See page 2 for more on this 1954-55 furlough.)



Hal Herman (left) and Philip Crouch confer with Lillian Trasher on the filming of "The Nile Mother," an award-winning documentary on Lillian's ministry (1955).

Years later, after we had left the orphanage and had gone back for a visit, I talked with her about the years she had spent at Assiout and the marvelous things she had accomplished. She suddenly turned to me and said, "Philip, I haven't done anything great."

Then she told me the only reason she would receive a special reward would be that she had stayed at the orphanage. "I have not run from any kind of hardship," she continued, "I have stayed and have tried to be faithful to the task that God has given me. Perhaps the Lord will remember that and give me a 'well done!'"

Not only is this a classic story of commitment, but it is also one of humility.

Lillian Trasher was a person of great determination. We were assigned to help at the orphanage because of her failing health. She did not know if she would live very long because the doctors had told her that her heart was worn out. The years of strenuous activity had taken their toll. And she had arthritis in her knees and joints.

After we arrived and took up our duties in 1948, Lillian went to bed because of her illnesses. No one was permitted to visit her. We thought perhaps the Lord was going to take her home at that time.

But one day while we were sitting in the office, the door opened and in walked Mamma Lillian.

With unusual enthusiasm she said, "Folks, I have decided to come back to work. I have stayed in bed long enough."

She reasoned that if the Lord was to take her at this time, she was determined it would be on the job, not in bed. That memorable experience was more than 10 years before the Lord finally took her to her heavenly home.

Nobody anywhere had any more compassion than Lillian Trasher. As long as she lived she never turned a baby away from her home. Even during times of difficulty and sickness, she kept the doors of the orphanage open.

At times Lillian was criticized for taking too many children into the orphan-

"I believe that when she dies, in spite of the fact she is a woman and a Christian, God will take her directly to paradise." — a Moslem Village Official

age. Her response was that the conditions of these children and the villages from which they came was so terrible that even the least amount of care was better than anything they would have otherwise. "And more than that," she would answer, "we can give them love and concern that they would never have in their villages."

That usually ended the criticism for the moment.

Mamma Lillian Trasher was a legend in her time. Naturally she was well known and respected in the Christian community, but she was just as much respected among the Moslems.

I remember very well one day in 1955 when Mamma was in America during that long overdue furlough. A very distinguished Moslem village official came into the office. We served him coffee and talked for a while. When he arose to leave, he reached into the folds of his long flowing robe and pulled out a bank note.

I was amazed. It was \$500. I raised an eyebrow and remarked that it was unusual for a Moslem to give to a Christian institution.

His response was quick. "Not so, not so." Then he moved closer and said almost in a whisper, "We here in Egypt know what this great lady has done for our poor children. And I believe that when she dies, in spite of the fact she is a woman and a Christian, God will take her directly to paradise."

No greater tribute could come from a Moslem.

My wife and I have many memories associated with our extremely exciting and interesting years spent at the Assiout Orphanage. Mamma Lillian Trasher's dedication to her calling has been a great inspiration to the work God has called us to perform.

We wouldn't trade those memories for anything in the world. ❖

Philip and Hazel Crouch with their two children, Wedge and Mark, 1957.



TIME FRAME

A QUICK LOOK INTO THE PAST

Each issue the editor selects items of interest for this column from the *Pentecostal Evangel*, *Latter Rain Evangel*, *Apostolic Faith*, *Word and Witness*, and other publications. Comments and suggestions from our readers are invited.

10 Years Ago — 1974

O.T. Killion, pastor of Cisco (Texas) Assembly of God, was recently appointed Cisco city judge. He will continue as the pastor of the church.

More than 1,100 boys and men from across the United States attended the First National Camporama of the Royal Rangers on the grounds of the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado.

20 Years Ago — 1964

New facilities were dedicated on the 50th anniversary of First Assembly, Findlay, Ohio. The church was established in 1907 by T.K. Leonard. Carl A. Malz is the present pastor.

Word has been received of the death of Ivan O. Miller, Prior Lake, Minnesota. He had pastored and had been associated with North Central Bible College and as a district official.

30 Years Ago — 1954

A 6-year attempt of the Italian Assemblies of God to gain official recognition was won on November 11 by a ruling of Italy's State Council.

Adele Flower and Mrs. Paul Ruth are thanking God for sparing their lives in a bus accident in Venezuela. The bus blew two tires and went through a bridge railing, landing on its top in a dry creek bed.

40 Years Ago — 1944

Missionaries are returning to Africa and India despite the war. *Africa*: Lillian Hogan,

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Pennington, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Downey, and Gladys Stock. *India*: Ethel King, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Murphy, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Merian, Ruth Kelly, Harriet Williams, and Yumna G. Malick.

Chaplain Joseph L. Gerhart wrote from somewhere in the Philippines that a new



Chaplain Gerhart and fortified chapel.

chapel was dug for the liberating forces in the Philippines. A 3-foot high sand bag wall was built around the chapel to protect worshipers from enemy bombs and bullets.

50 Years Ago — 1934

The Sara Coxe Memorial Church at Chapra (India) was dedicated December 23. Mrs. Violet Schoonmaker, who worked with Miss Coxe, is in charge of the work at Chapra.

Evangelist Watson Argue closed a 5-week campaign in Kansas City. Pastor A.A. Wilson told *The Latter Rain Evangel* that 172 adults were saved, 127 new members came into the church, 73 were baptized in water, and several received the baptism in the Spirit. The Sunday school attendance reached 766.

60 Years Ago — 1924

Mrs. Esther Harvey has returned to India, taking with her a new missionary, Miss Katherine Cook. (*Miss Cook died in India in 1952; Mrs. Harvey is now 93 and lives at Maranatha Manor, Springfield.*)

Deaths of two missionaries were reported in the *Latter Rain Evangel*: Esther Hanson, missionary to China and sister of missionary Anna Berg; and Eric Booth-Clibborn, who had been in the French Sudan just 6 weeks.

Archives Programs Being Released in Springfield

Cable TV viewers in Springfield, Missouri, can now watch an Archives program released on Channel 19, which is operated by Evangel College. The interview programs are broadcast on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-7:30 p.m.

ARCHIVES ACTIVITIES

Recent Acquisitions

Oral History: Colin Whittaker, interviewed by Edith Blumhofer and Wayne Warner; Rose Pitman Downing, interviewed by Cornelius Rientjes; Ralph Durham and Cecil Liddle, interviewed by Wayne Warner; narration by A. Neal Burns.

Minutes of Arkansas-Louisiana District, donated by A. Neal Burns.

Miscellaneous collection of early Pentecostal magazines, tracts, and a copy of their life story, "Memos of a Pioneer," donated by O.T. and Vida Killion.

"The Life and Ministry of Daniel J. DuBose, unpublished manuscript donated by Mary DuBose Greenaway.

"The Writings and Thought of Frank Bartleman," a paper by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

"Marching to Zion": Religion in a Modern Theocracy (Zion City, Illinois), a paper by Grant Wacker.

"Searching for Norman Rockwell: Popular Evangelicalism in Contemporary America," by Grant Wacker, chapter in forthcoming book *The Evangelical Tradition in America*, edited by Leonard I. Sweet.

Set of *Team* magazines (1961), donated by Floyd T. Shockley.

New Equipment Purchases

The Archives recently took delivery on the following equipment: Expo Frame convention exhibit, Marantz stereo recorder, 3-shelf book cart, Canon macro lens.

When Pentecost Came to Alabama

Believers Build Places of Worship, Form Organizations

By Robert H. Spence

Sometime during Alabama's spiritual awakening in 1908, the presiding elder of the Gulf District of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, sent the highly respected George H. Hicks to the Brownville Methodist Church to correct the "error" that had arisen regarding speaking in tongues.

Hicks, who was a victim of arthritis, attended a service at the church that was conducted by J.E. Spence who had only recently been filled with the Spirit.

During the service Mary Ellen Pynes, a young woman who had never traveled and who had limited formal education, gave a message in tongues.

Hicks was visibly moved because he had understood every word she had spoken, which was in classical Greek. In substance it was that this revival was real and that God would heal him of his arthritic condition if he would ask for prayer.

At the conclusion of the utterance, Hicks told the people what had happened. Spence then invited Hicks to the altar where he was anointed with oil. After prayer he was instantly healed of arthritis. Hicks later taught at the Kokomo (Alabama) Bible School which G.G. Miller had organized.

Walter B. Jessup was another pioneer who was used in the early outpouring of the Spirit in Alabama. His Pentecostal indoctrination had come from none other than Charles F. Parham.

Jessup was a native of Kentucky but by 1905 was living in Alvin, Texas. He was orphaned and having a difficult time surviving. One day some Pentecostals who had a long train layover in Alvin took advantage of the time to conduct a street service. Apparently this was the first local proclamation of the Pentecostal message. Later, in a follow-up service at a rented building, Walter Jessup was saved. With no family ties to restrain him, Jessup joined the Pentecostal workers and moved



Sadie L. Johnson, first C.A. president of Alabama-Georgia District. Photo courtesy of Rachel Johnson Rigby.



J.E. Spence, early pioneer in Alabama. Courtesy of Southern Missouri District.



Mattie Ledbetter, an early missionary to China. Courtesy of Rachel Johnson Rigby.



Walter B. Jessup, first chairman of the Southeastern District, 1915-20. Courtesy of Jessup family.

Concluding Part on Pentecostals and Their Early Alabama History

Editor's Note. The material for this article was adapted from The First Fifty Years, the story of the Assemblies of God in Alabama (1915-65), by Robert H. Spence. Part 1 was published in the fall issue.

on to Houston. W.F. Carothers, a Houston attorney and pastor, assumed responsibility for the boy.

When Charles F. Parham opened his Houston Bible school in December 1905, Jessup was one of the students. He was ordained that winter in Houston by the Apostolic Faith movement. After his ordination he began to evangelize, motivated by the conviction that the world was waiting for him alone to tell the good news. By 1907, he reached Mobile.

Once in Mobile, Jessup erected his tent in the downtown area and then later in the

old Crichton section. Some who accepted the Pentecostal message in 1907 later became the nucleus for the Crichton Assembly of God.¹

Elsewhere in the Mobile area during this time a Brother McKeever conducted Pentecostal services. The four Everett brothers, Henry, Tom, Jim, and George, came into the Pentecostal movement in McKeever's meeting. These four men provided leadership in the Whistler Assembly of God for many years.

Predating the holiness preaching of M.M. Pinson was the work of another

holiness preacher, L.P. Adams, a well-educated former lawyer from Memphis, Tennessee. Adams' influence was largely felt in and around Clanton, Alabama.

For several years prior to 1900 Adams enjoyed great respect in the Chilton County area and made it a practice to conduct annual holiness meetings. Soon these meetings became known as the Central Alabama Holiness Camp Meeting. As early as January 1905 property was obtained in the corporate name. The first permanent building was erected in 1905-06.

Although Adams had been baptized in the Spirit before his 1907 meeting in Clanton, there was little response to his Pentecostal preaching that year.

In 1908, however, it was a different story. As Adams read his text, the silence was broken when a woman seated on the front row began to speak in tongues. This was to become a day of Pentecost for Chilton County. Hungry-hearted seekers began to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Soon the building could not hold the crowds.

The outpouring of the Spirit that day in 1908 laid the foundation for the assemblies that have been built in the Clanton area.

Farther to the north in the fall of 1908, some of those who had been most active in the Birmingham revival the previous year established a church at Warrior. Henry G. Rodgers conducted the first meeting in a rented school building. M.M. Pinson accompanied Rodgers for a later meeting in the same building. Land was purchased and a building constructed.²

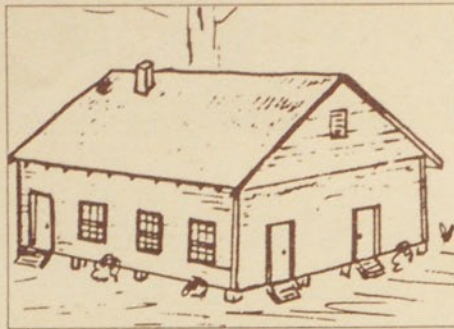
El Bethel, near New Brockton, also has an interesting beginning. M.M. Pinson was invited to conduct a revival at the Old Tabernacle Methodist Church. Accompanying Pinson were Henry G. Rodgers and G.G. Miller.

The Pentecostals who worshiped at the Old Tabernacle church were tolerated primarily because of the influential positions of the DuBose family.³

The local Methodist view was that if they could tolerate the Pentecostals and their special speakers, perhaps their zeal would eventually die down and some degree of normalcy could be restored.



Robert H. Spence
is President of
Evangel College



Two of the earliest church buildings in Alabama. Above, El Bethel, New Brockton; at the right is the first building used by the Warrior congregation. Courtesy of W. Lunsford, Laurelle DuBose Weatherford, and H.L. Caudle.

Such a view, however, was unrealistic.

When Pinson made a remark which implied the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was "south of God," one of the Old Tabernacle church elders asked, "Why don't these people build them a church of their own?"

Joshua DuBose, the father of Dan and Jim, answered that they would build their own church. DuBose donated the timber necessary for a building, and what was to become the El Bethel Assembly of God was completed in February 1910. The by-laws for the church were later written by J.W. Ledbetter, and the building was moved to its present location in 1914.⁴

At High Falls the tent used by M.M. Pinson did not survive the first revival. Vandals burned the tent. In other places there were threats and even acts of violence that endangered the lives of the workers.

While Evangelist McKeever conducted a service in a rented lodge hall at Whistler, men from the community fired roman candles into the building.

Persecution, however, did not diminish the zeal and fervor of those who had "tasted new wine." Services lasted long — some of the Temple Assembly members can remember morning services that lasted until 5 p.m.

Many supernatural accounts sprinkled the diaries of these early workers. A story from Graceville, Florida, is a good example.

Sadie Johnson played the piano for a revival meeting in Graceville and told how night after night a woman in the congregation arose from her seat, danced gracefully to a certain window and, facing the outside, spoke in tongues.

From his position outside the church a Mr. Williams, the husband of one of the members, noticed his employer, a prominent Jew in the town, coming every night and standing near this particular window. One night Williams asked his employer why he was coming to this Christian



C.H. and Sadie Johnson, who contributed to the development of the Alabama District. Photo courtesy of Rachel Johnson Rigby.

church. The Jew, who had been reared in Europe, replied, "There's a little woman who comes to this window night after night and tells me in my own language that my Messiah is coming soon."

Even though the early Pentecostals in Alabama enjoyed a certain degree of freedom from ecclesiastical bondage, some far-sighted leaders realized that for their own protection they needed some type of organization.

Just how soon organizational efforts in Alabama began is uncertain. Minutes exist of the "Third Annual Meeting of the Alabama Pentecostal Association" which was held in Birmingham, September 17-19, 1908.⁵

H.G. Rodgers led a successful move to enlarge the scope and territory of the organization which was renamed the Southern Pentecostal Association. In the fall of 1909 Rodgers spearheaded an effort in Dothan to enlist uncommitted Spirit-filled ministers in a new association which was called the Church of God. They later discovered that A.J. Tomlinson had already selected that name for his organization in Cleveland, Tennessee. However, the Alabama group operated for several months as the Church of God until they united —

at least in name — with Charles H. Mason's Church of God in Christ.⁶

Twenty months after the General Council of the Assemblies of God organized, the Southeastern District was formed, which included churches in Alabama and northern Florida. Many of the ministers and churches which had belonged to the earlier organizations met at Hartford, Alabama, for this historic meeting, December 1-4, 1915. Two men were elected to serve the new district: W.B. Jessup, chairman; and J.W. Ledbetter, secretary.

Delegates at the organizational meeting accepted a committee report which recommended that 44 churches, arranged in 11 groups, comprise the Southeastern District.

Later churches from Georgia united with the district. In 1929 the Florida churches withdrew to form the West Florida District Council, leaving only the churches in Alabama and Georgia. These churches then voted to change the name of their district to the Alabama-Georgia District Council, which operated until 1934 when the two states formed separate districts.

Today in the area which comprised the old Southeastern District there are 700 Assemblies of God churches and 64,352 members.

There can be no doubt that God used the Pentecostal revival in the early 1900s, as He has used it since, to reap a spiritual harvest. Only the chronicles of heaven contain the full story of the souls that have been saved. In many cases, seed that had been planted and watered through the years was harvested as the first Spirit-filled preachers fanned out through Alabama and moved into neighboring states.

Notes

1. When the Southeastern District of the Assemblies of God was formed in 1915, W.B. Jessup was elected as the first permanent chairman, a position he filled until 1920.

2. This church, now the Warrior Assembly of God, observed its 77th anniversary in October.

3. An ancestor, William DuBose, was an early settler in the New Brockton area. According to the history of the Old Tabernacle Methodist Church, he was a trustee when the church was established in 1858.

4. El Bethel will observe its 75th anniversary in May 1985. Five charter members are still living: Mrs. Erie Hornsby, Mrs. Bertie Hornsby, Mrs. Maude Rachels, Mrs. Lena Spears, and Mrs. Rilla Bruce.

5. A "third annual meeting" in 1908 does not necessarily mean that this group was organized in 1906. Often groups such as these would have more than one "annual" meeting a year.

6. More information on this early organization is available in "The Pentecostal Revival and Early Organizations," by C.C. Burnett, *Heritage*, Spring 1984.

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Wants Life Membership

I am really impressed with the *Heritage* project. So I would like to have a lifetime membership instead of a year (\$100 check enclosed). I saw pictures of many people I know in the summer 1984 issue. I think this project will be a great thing for our Assemblies of God.

Robert R. Gowins
Mt. Olive, Alabama

The 13 back issues of Heritage, a lifetime certificate, and a membership premium have been sent to the writer. He is pastor of Evangel Assembly of God, Mount Olive.

Postscript to Upper Midwest Story

I read with interest the article, "When Pentecost Came to the Upper Midwest" (Spring 1984), by G. Raymond Carlson. I am a product of that "early day" revival and would like to send a gift subscription to my mother and step-father. I would also like to subscribe for myself.

I have heard the name of Evangelist Blanche Brittain since my earliest boyhood. In 1926 my dad, Peter Ohlin, a young Swedish immigrant, went from Minnesota to the Crosby-Noonan area to work in the wheat harvest. Brother Carlson's neighbor took my dad to hear Sister Brittain in a tent meeting. That night he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal saviour. A year later Dad took his friend David Kasperson to the harvest fields. That year both of them were blessed by another revival in the Crosby-Noonan area.

A few months later Dad left his farm in Minnesota to preach the gospel. He had a rich ministry in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin until his home-

Archives Looking for Book Donors

Have you written a book? If you have — whether it was published by Harper & Row or your local printer — the Assemblies of God Archives should have a copy.

The Archives is interested in books written by people associated with the Assemblies of God and the early Pentecostal movement; in addition, books about some aspect of the movement and its people are important records for the Archives.

Authors and others who have copies of books that fit the above categories and who would like to donate them to the Archives, are asked to write to the director.

going in 1955.

Nine years later it was my privilege to conduct the wedding ceremony which united my mother and David Kasperson. They are still active in First Assembly, Lancaster, California. I know they will enjoy *Heritage!*

John V. Ohlin
Conference and Convention
Coordinator
A/G Headquarters

United With Assemblies of God in 1923

My congratulations to you and your staff are long overdue. What a blessing *Heritage* is to all of us.

The article on P. C. Nelson [summer 1984] is of particular interest to me, a former student of this great Bible teacher. It was my privilege to be in his classes at Southwestern Bible School in Enid, Oklahoma, from 1933 until 1936.

My thanks to James Singleton for rescuing and preserving these valuable documents.

I have been in the Assemblies of God since 1923, when at the age of 11 I was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Through the years I have known personally many of the outstanding leaders in our movement. So it is with happy memories that I read about them in *Heritage*. It brings joy to my soul.

Keep up the good work, and may God richly bless you.

Vera Draper Martin
Senior Retired (Ordained)
Terrebonne, Oregon

Mrs. Martin refers to the story we told regarding James Singleton's involvement in preserving materials collected by the late P. C. Nelson.

Retired Teacher Enjoys Heritage

I haven't written much since my long illness, but I felt I should write and tell you how much I enjoy *Heritage*. In the summer issue I saw so many faces I know or have known. It takes me back many years. Thank you.

Hazel M. Forrester
Springfield, Missouri

Thankful for Ministry of Archives

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading the last two issues of *Heritage*. I praise God that someone felt the burden to see to it that our heritage is not lost.

John Alessi, Pastor
Grace Church of Kendall
Miami, Florida

A Mountain Peak of My Spiritual Experience

How the Holy Spirit Used a Novice Preacher in 1922

By Aaron A. Wilson

In 1922 I was in my first pastorate at Puxico, Missouri, which is in the southeastern part of the state. I was a real novice in the ministry, pastoring a small congregation in a town of only 700.

Evangelist Maria B. Woodworth-Etter was at that time closing out an outstanding ministry. I had read a lot about her but had never been in one of her meetings. When I heard that she would be conducting services in Sikeston, I told one of the women in the church that I would like to attend a service and hear Sister Etter preach.

I didn't have a car at that time, but the woman in the church told me her sister had a car and would be happy to take us to one of the meetings in Sikeston, which is about 60 miles from Puxico.

All the way to Sikeston I was looking forward to hearing Sister Etter preach.

When we walked into the open-air meeting at Sikeston, we looked at the biggest church crowd we had ever seen. I thought it looked like 10,000 people, but it was probably more like a thousand.

Before the service started several people on the platform were talking with Sister Etter. We learned later that the song leader's mother had died so he had gone to the funeral. They were looking for a song leader.

Soon a woman on the platform walked into the audience and came straight toward my wife and me. We then discovered that we knew the woman.

She said, "Brother Aaron, Mrs. Etter wants you to come to the platform."

But I didn't think I belonged on the platform. The woman insisted, so I went. After I met Sister Etter, they asked me to lead the singing. I answered that I had never led a song service for such a big congregation. I hadn't been preaching

very long, and the crowds at Puxico were very small compared to this one.

Mrs. Etter answered my objection. "You'll do all right. The Lord will help you."

With fear and trembling I accepted the responsibility and talked with Sister Etter about the type of songs she wanted.

After I had led a verse of the first song and was into the second verse, I felt a light tap on my shoulder. It was Mrs. Etter. She said, "Brother, the Lord would have you preach here tonight."

I was stunned. I had reluctantly accepted the invitation to lead the song ser-

"Brother, the Lord would have you preach here tonight." — Sister Etter

vice. Now Sister Etter wanted me to preach!

My wife was sitting at least a hundred feet away and saw Sister Etter speak to me and then she saw my face turn red. She thought Sister Etter had rebuked me for the way I was leading the singing.

I went on with the singing and got into the second song. I felt that little tap on my shoulder again. This time Sister Etter was more forceful. "Brother, don't fail God. He wants you to preach here tonight."

I hardly knew what to say. I had come to hear this great woman preach, and now she was asking me, a novice, to preach to this huge crowd.

I finished the song service and sat down.

Sister Etter went on with the service, and it was a tremendous meeting. A girl whose face had been eaten up with cancer had been prayed for in an earlier service in the revival. She had come to show the crowd that she was healed. That testimony was a tremendous experience.

When the time came for me to preach, I had decided I would preach along the line I had preached the previous Sunday night in my church — on the coming of the Lord.

But the Holy Spirit had other plans.

After Sister Etter announced that I would be speaking, I stood to my feet and walked toward the pulpit. I had only taken a few steps when suddenly a passage from the 5th chapter of John flashed through my mind: "Wilt thou be made whole?"

And again it thundered in my heart, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

I took the passage for my text, and the Spirit of God preached that whole sermon through me. I really listened to myself preach. God moved through the audience in a miraculous manner.

It wasn't me. It was the Holy Spirit. I was just a young preacher and didn't know how to handle a crowd like this one. The Spirit moved!

That service has been one of the mountain peaks of my Christian experience.

I was able to meet Sister Etter, be with her for a service, see the Spirit lead her. And then when I humbly obeyed in that open-air meeting 60 years ago, I saw the Spirit work through a poor instrument to bring tremendous results.

Praise God!



Aaron A. Wilson was a beloved pastor, camp meeting speaker, district superintendent, and executive presbyter. He founded First Assembly (now Evangel Temple), Kansas City, Missouri, which he pastored for more than 30 years. He died November 6, 1984, at the age of 93.

The editor interviewed Wilson on audio tape on two occasions. The story on this page is from an interview conducted August 4, 1978.