



NEWSLETTER

Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society
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BIOGRAPHY OF E. GASTON COLLINS WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY FRANK N. COOK.....By Paul Linn Dale

Edwin Gaston Collins' grandson, Frank N. Cook, Lewisburg, TN recently released a book about his grandfather titled, ***Buy the Truth and Sell It Not: The Life of E. Gaston Collins.***

Frank tells the story of Gaston's beginnings in Tennessee, his education at Maritime Bible and Literary College in Nova Scotia, his struggles to become an evangelist, his time as preacher and editor in Ontario, and his struggles with controversies in the church.

Edwin 'E' Gaston Collins was an American-born evangelist who received his initial Bible college education in Canada's Atlantic province of Nova Scotia in the years 1909 to 1912.

He served as a minister of the Gospel in Canada and the United States.

Gaston was born in Huntland, Tennessee on Thursday, December 4th, 1890. He dedicated his life to the Lord when he was baptized at the age of 16 in 1906. The following year, a Canadian evangelist, Ora Hurbert "O.H." Tallman held a meeting in Gaston's home town and impressed the importance of faith upon the young man.

At the age of 19, in 1909, Gaston moved to the Canadian province of Nova Scotia to attend the new Maritime Bible and Literary College (MB&LC), located in West Gore. The college was sponsored by the West Gore church of Christ.

"O.H." Tallman was the President of MB&LC. He had graduated from Potter Bible College in Bowling Green, Kentucky, a school led by James A. Harding. He served as a professor there as did his brother Ozro Ellis "O.E." Tallman. O.E. was Vice-President at MB&LC.

Gaston was a gifted singer and majored in music. His time at the college led him to become an evangelist. He preached his first sermon in Mill Village, Nova Scotia in 1910.

2014 ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, August 16, 2014
10:00 a.m – 3:00 p.m.

To be held at the meeting place of

BAYVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST
1708 Bayview Ave.
Toronto, Ontario

Featuring:

Guest Speakers:

Shelley Jacobs:
**Pacifism in Canadian Churches of
Christ: Part I & Part II**

Ed Broadus:
**New Information About the Disciples'
Early Days in Toronto**

Following graduation in 1913, Gaston married Ada Simm, a Canadian teacher from Nova Scotia who served at MB&LC. The Collins had 3 daughters. In the fall semester Of 1913, Gaston began his teaching career at the college, where he taught music and math.

Maritime Bible and Literary College closed in 1915 during World War I. Canada had entered the war several years before the United States. For various reasons the war affected the numerous schools and colleges of various faiths across Canada. Another school of churches of Christ located in Canada, Beamsville Bible School, founded by Sim Malious Jones in 1902, also closed in 1915.

Gaston returned to the United States in 1915 and began his work as an evangelist, a role he filled for over 50 years.

In 1925, the Collins family returned to Canada to work with the Meaford, Ontario

church of Christ. In addition to preaching in Meaford, Gaston worked with two rural congregations in the local area, Cape Rich and Griersville, and also assisted the church in Collingwood, Ontario.

In addition to his evangelistic responsibilities, Gaston served as editor of the Canadian churches of Christ magazine, Christian Monthly Review (CMR) for nearly five years. The magazine under his leadership was well respected among the churches of Christ in Canada and elsewhere. Gaston followed the previous editors' goal of avoiding confrontation and focused on building up the church.

Gaston's wife came from Nova Scotia and his first child was born there. Even though Gaston spent much of his later life in the States, he was forever linked in spirit and thought to family, friends, brothers and sisters in the "true north."

Upon his return to the United States in 1929, Gaston served as an evangelist, preached and led singing at a number of gospel meetings. In 1931 he became the office secretary for the Nashville, Tennessee based Gospel Advocate magazine. He served the paper until 1937.

In addition to his evangelistic work, he also served for several years as a radio preacher.

Gaston furthered his education at David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee, and at Middle Tennessee State College.

Edwin Gaston Collins died on Friday, March 6, 1970. He is buried in Nashville, Tennessee.

Sources: "The Bible Student"; "Christian Monthly Review"; "Gospel Herald."

Buy the Truth and Sell it Not: The Life of E. Gaston Collins: "How the love of truth led a young man from Franklin County, Tennessee through twelve states, three provinces and two spiritual battles. Gaston Collins came from a time and place shaped by the pioneer spirit of David Crockett and the Godly spirit of David Lipscomb. The greatest influence on his life, though, was the Word of God. He wanted to know it, to live it, and to share it with as many as possible."

The book is available in an e-book edition which contains no illustrations or appendices. The print versions include many old family photographs and nine appendices. One appendix is an autobiographical paper written by his

daughter Claire, which includes details of her life in Canada.

The other appendices are Gaston's writings. Gaston was not only influenced by the Tallman brothers, but also by his kinsman David Lipscomb. One of the appendices is a 24 page booklet, published by Gaston in 1924, concerning the relationship of the Christian to the world. Readers familiar with David Lipscomb's views on civil government will find Gaston's views to be similar.

The book is available at Barnes & Noble, e-book, \$2.99, paperback, \$12.99. hard cover, \$23.41.



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New Information about the Early Days of the Shuter Street Church in Toronto

The first Disciples Church in Toronto was formed by 1834, and one of the charter members was James Beaty, Sr. These are some of the facts already known about the origin of this congregation. But other interesting information has been discovered recently that helps us know more about the early days of what came to be known as the Shuter Street Church.

In 1885 a story entitled "A Personal Narrative," by Duncan Sinclair, was published in *The Disciple of Christ*, a journal edited by Isaac and Russell Errett. When Sinclair wrote his narrative, he was living in Meaford, Ontario, but what he penned was the story of his early spiritual pilgrimage, beginning in 1838 in Dundee, Scotland. After leaving the Presbyterian Church in 1841, he left Dundee for brief stays in Liverpool and London before crossing the Atlantic to New York City. There he attended the Greene Street Disciples church. From there he went to Pennsylvania for a short time before going on to Toronto, arriving probably by 1843, where he found "a small congregation" which he described as "remarkably friendly and sociable, insomuch that I felt myself among friends, who would doubtless make my sojourn among them both pleasant and agreeable."

Sinclair then gives some valuable information about this church: "The prominent brethren in this little church at the time were James Beaty, Sr., James Lesslie, and Peter Rutherford. The two former were leading business men in the city; the latter was a builder and contractor. There were several brethren who lived in the country, who were frequent visitors and held fellowship with this church. Among them was Elder George Barclay, whose residence was in the township of Pickering, some twenty-five miles east of Toronto. Elder Barclay was formerly a Baptist minister, and an old settler in that part of the country. For many years, without fee or reward, he preached the gospel, over a wide district, being instant in season and out of season, laboring in the cause with much acceptance among the people."

After further words of praise for Barclay, Sinclair said, "Elder Barclay, we have every reason to believe, was the pioneer preacher of the primitive gospel in Canada. He and James Beaty, with six others, organized in

Toronto the first church upon the apostolic model known in Canada, several years prior to my coming among them. By the time I reached Toronto, these brethren had increased in numbers, and extended their influence among the people by preaching the ancient faith at various stations beyond the limits of the city. They also held fellowship with several small congregations in the country parts, some forty miles to the northwest. In their intercourse with these brethren they had many pleasant reunions which were mutually beneficial."

Sinclair's stay in Canada at that time lasted three and a half years. Although he did not live in Toronto during most of that time, he said he frequently visited there. He mentioned a trip made by James Beaty to New York City in 1845, where Sinclair said Beaty frequently went on business, and when he was there "he invariably met with the Greene Street church."

We know from the Norval church records that Duncan Sinclair was "received by letter" at that church in 1845. The record book states that he moved away in 1846 or 1847. Sinclair does not tell us when he first came to Toronto, but it had to have been while James Lesslie was still meeting with Shuter Street. According to W. W. Eaton, who visited there in the summer of 1844, some had recently taken their letter and formed a new congregation. He does not name those who left, but they included Lesslie and James Chalmers Scott. Also, Sinclair's arrival was prior to Peter Rutherford's death in 1846. Since Sinclair said that his total stay in Canada at that time was three and a half years and the Norval church record says he left in 1846 or 1847, his arrival in Toronto was likely in the summer of 1843.

Several matters from Sinclair's narrative deserve further comment. One is Barclay's role in establishing the Toronto church. Joseph Ash, in his memoirs, seemed unaware of Barclay's pivotal part, saying only that he had broken his connection with the Baptist association and met with those in Toronto as often as was convenient.

Barclay and his family were from Scotland, where at one time they had attended the same Scotch Baptist church in Largo where David Oliphant, Sr. and his wife, Sophia, worshiped. Barclay came to Canada in 1816 with the encouragement of James Buchanan, the British consul in New York City, who was an ardent Baptist. In Canada

Barclay served for many years as a Baptist preacher, working with the Baptist Association. During that time, he ordained James Black and Alexander Stewart. The latter, along with John Menzies, helped establish the church in Norval in 1820.

Sinclair called Barclay “the pioneer preacher of the primitive gospel in Canada.” By this Sinclair apparently meant that Barclay was the first to preach the distinctive principles of the Disciples. James Black disputed the notion that the Toronto church was first in Canada and would undoubtedly have denied that Barclay was the first preacher of the primitive gospel in this country. Be that as it may, Sinclair’s praise of him suggests that Barclay needs to be given more attention than Restoration Movement historians have given him when telling the story of the Disciples’ origins in Ontario.

Sinclair names three men, James Beaty, James Lesslie, and Peter Rutherford, who “were prominent brethren in this little church at the time.” He credits Beaty with organizing the church, along with Barclay and six others. This agrees with what other sources say about Beaty’s role. How Beaty arrived at his restorationist views has been a puzzle, but Beaty’s frequent trips to New York on business may provide a clue. While there he met with the Greene St. Disciples. This church had its beginning in 1835, at least a year after Beaty, Barclay, and others formed the Toronto church. Greene St. had emerged from a Scottish Baptist church founded in 1810, which had other Ontario connections. James Buchanan, the British consul, was a member there, and for a few years Thomas and Eleanor Stephens were art of this church, before coming to Canada and eventually to Norval. Beaty had lived in New York for three years before moving to Canada in 1818, and if business continued to take him there during the intervening years his contact with the New York church may have helped shape his religious views.

Sinclair describes Beaty and Lesslie as “leading business men in the city,” which is eminently true. In his earlier years Beaty was a shoemaker and a leather merchant, but later he was involved in multiple businesses and in politics. By the time Sinclair became acquainted with Beaty, he had already served on the city council.

James Lesslie and Duncan Sinclair were from the same town in Scotland – Dundee. Lesslie’s father and some of his brothers

were stationers and book dealers, and beginning in the 1820s they had stores in the three leading cities in the province – Kingston, York (Toronto), and Dundas (then more prominent than Hamilton). James was running the family’s Toronto operation when Sinclair knew him. Business took Lesslie to New York City, and while there in 1842 he met Thomas Chalmers Scott, who was also from Dundee, and he persuaded him to move to Toronto and work with him in his business. Scott was new in the city when Sinclair was there, but he eventually became the leading member of the second Disciples congregation after it was formed.

A third person Sinclair mentions as being prominent in the Toronto church was Peter Rutherford, whom he describes as “a builder and a contractor.” Rutherford had come out of the Baptist church in Toronto with James Beaty and James Lesslie. His role with the Disciples was largely forgotten because he died early, in 1846, two years after the death of his wife, Martha. The Rutherfords had a son, John, who was about seven when his father died. James Lesslie adopted him and provided for his education. John later went into the printing business in Owen Sound and eventually became the mayor there.

Sinclair came to Toronto a year or so after the church moved into its own building, which was provided by James Beaty. Two houses were joined together, and the church first met there the first Sunday in May, 1842



This sketch of the church’s meeting house is taken from *Robertson’s Landmarks of Toronto* (1904) and can be found on line. The building was located at the corner of Shuter and Victoria Street. Both the sketch of the building and the narrative of Duncan Sinclair provide us with information about the early days of the Toronto church that was not available to us before.

Edwin Broadus, Burlington, Ontario

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Over 500 items have been added to the CCCHS archival collection during the 12 month period, May 2013—April 2014. Included in this number are over 250 items submitted by Eugene Perry. These represent the last of Eugene's lifetime collection that he has directed to the historical society. Other contributors of significant numbers or submissions are Ralph Perry, Myrna Perry, Geoffrey Ellis, Gordon Ellis and Shelley Jacobs.

The following are some of Eugene Perry's contributions:

Responses to Gospel Herald surveys, 1956, 1966.
GLCC "HEMSO," 1953-1972.
British published periodicals: The Old Paths, 1879, 1888, 1891-1912; The Bible Advocate, 1892, 1895-1906, 1923-34; Christian Advocate, 1860-1884.
Canadian periodical: The Bible Student, 1904-1913, The Gleaner, 1914.
American periodical: The Way (editor, James A. Harding, two issues), 1902.
Church bulletins (collected in support of the "News from the Churches" column of the Gospel Herald, beginning in 1953) for over 80 congregations from across Canada.
Radville Christian College: Precious Memories, 1949-1950; Northern Lights, 1950-1955; The Trumpet, 1950-1955.
Eugene C. Perry, miscellaneous correspondence as Gospel Herald editor.
Source notes: paper on David Oliphant, Jr.
Source notes: thesis, "A History of Religious Periodicals in the Restoration Periodicals in the Restoration Movement in Canada."
Selkirk Church of Christ, Membership List, 1885-1903.
The following is a sample of items received from a number of sources:
Meeting records of the Owen Sound Church of Christ, 1908-1918.
Memoirs of Ed Baker, "The Settlers of the Portage" (1877), (Manitoulin Island history).
Lynn Anderson, "An American in a Canadian Situation."
H. N. Bailey, Revelation, a Commentary.
Wilma Moore, Omagh Bible School Photo Album; "The story of Omagh Bible School, the Early Years."
Alvin Jennings, CD. "Pioneer Mission in Saskatchewan, 1951-1956," CD.
Digitized copy of the issues of the Gospel Herald, 1936-1991, CD.
J. C. Bailey, commentaries, Galatians, Hebrews.

Barb Hoover, History Notes on the Selkirk Church of Christ.

Beamsville Bible School, 1905-1906 grade book, dictionary used in school.

Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ, History 1924-1974.

Brantford Church of Christ, History.

Sarnia Church of Christ, History.

Jim Hawkins, "Beaming Christ to British Columbia," bulletins.

"Return to... "Radville, Minter, Weyburn" (reunions), DVDs.

Lillian Torkelson, "Historical Highlights," DVD.

Sherling-Bailey Debate (On Conscience).

Myrna Perry: Obituaries collected from the Bible Index, Bible Student, and the Christian Monthly Review, CD.

Myrna Perry, "Haldimand County Churches: Extracts from the Periodicals," paper & CD.

Roy Merritt's audio tapes.

Thunder Bay Church of Christ, albums, bulletins, congregational records, and memorabilia.

Shelley Jacobs, "Manitoba Reports in the Bible Student."

Alexander Campbell, The Christian Baptist, Vol. 1-7; Living Oracles (1873); "Christian Baptism, with its Antecedents and Consequences."

R. H. Boll, Word and Work Magazine.

Brian Sullivan, "Clear and Plain."

H. M. McKerlie, "Evidences of Christianity" (correspondence course); "A Protest and a Plea"; "Essays on the Church of Christ."

Murray Hammond, "Why I Believe in God."

David Hallet, Alpha Bible School Reports.

Donald Perry, North India News.

Steve May, "Omagh, A Restoration Miniature."

H. A. Rogers, "The Holy Spirit" (tract).

Joe Cannon, reports from Ibaraki, Okinawa, Papua New Guinea.

Claude Cox, Syllabus, Intertestamental Literature and History.

Andy Bacic, Yugoslavia Report.

Javier Cuarezma, Detroit, Michigan.

Ray and Elizabeth Lock, PNG Reports, 1984.

Maritime Bible and Literary College, newspaper report.

Geoffrey Ellis: "An Inquiry into the Growth of Disciples of Christ in 19th Century Ontario" (Thesis, 1994); "An Inquiry into the Growth of Churches of Christ in Ontario" Project Thesis, 1990).

Lewis Kent, biographical

Bob Sandiford, "Healthy Sexuality," a three lesson study.

Walter Hart, paper, "Coping with Stress."

Wes Kuryluk, paper, "When the Perfect Comes"
1 Cor. 13:8-13

Tim Johnson, Outline, "Oneness in Christ."

David Knutson, study guide, "Joshua."

FINANCIAL REPORT & APOLOGY

The year-end financial report that was presented at the 2013 annual meeting included an adjustment to the Beginning Balance. The Beginning Balance is, by default, the Closing Balance from the year before. However, the Closing Balance from the year before did not match the corresponding Bank Balance for the same date.

Please note that your worthy financial officers did their jobs faithfully and carried forward the closing and beginning balances appropriately each year. At some point in the past, now untraceable, the closing balance ceased to match the bank balance. Upon consulting respected accountant Jim Dale about the proper procedure, this adjustment was added in to make things balance.

APOLOGY – The amount of the adjustment entered to the annual report was \$191.15. I have discovered that I mistyped the number. It should have been \$191.95, a difference of \$0.80.

On your Annual Financial Report the Total Closing Balance (Opening Balance plus income minus Expenditures) should be \$1,705.75, which should match the Bank Account Closing Balance at the very bottom.

I have altered the official financial report to reflect this correction and will file the corrected copy in our permanent financial record.

If you wish to have a corrected copy, please contact me by mail, phone or email. I can send a PDF file as an email attachment or mail you a hard copy.

-----Margaret Hibbard, CCCHS Financial Officer

THE VALUE OF HISTORY

During my years in high school, history was one of my favourite subjects of study. I can't say that for most of my classmates. As I have talked with students in the many years since my high school days, I have found history to be an unpopular course of study. That may tell us why so few younger adults show interest in the Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society. Of the paid-up members of CCCHS, very few are young adults.

It is my belief that the older one becomes, the more interested he or she will be in history. If there was no CCCHS, so much of the history of the church of Christ in Canada would be lost.

Because of my appreciation of history, I wrote yearly summaries of the activities of the churches where I served as local preacher. Now, when my wife and/or I cannot recall the name of a certain individual we've known in the past, or cannot remember the date of some activity, or other informations of past events, I open my records and find the information. We regard those historical records as one of our valuable assets.

In reading some of the history of earlier Christians, their lives, their victories, their faithfulness and their struggles, we can be encouraged in our present efforts to please the God who has provided us with His love, His grace and His forgiveness.

We, as the board of directors, are deeply concerned about the future of the CCCHS. Membership has been steadily decreasing. Some board members have reached their declining years.

We urge readers of this newsletter, young or old, to seriously consider becoming CCCHS members. We, also, request that present members and other interested parties help the society by encouraging friends to become members. Membership is only \$25 per year. Why not attend the annual meeting of CCCHS in August and enroll as a member, or contact our financial officer, Margaret Hibbard.

-----Wayford Smith, CCCHS secretary