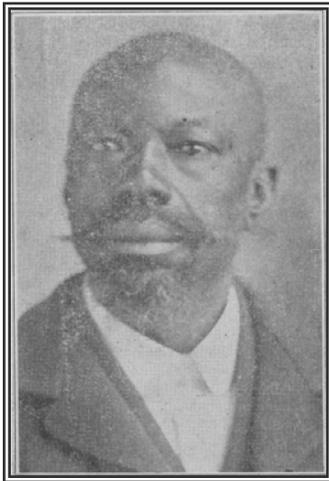


BIOGRAPHY
OF
G.W. WINN



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I was born on the Henry Weich plantation 4 miles west of Thomasville, Georgia on the Big Road from Thomasville to Tallahassee, Florida on Dec. 4, 1847.

Being born a slave, my master gave me to his daughter who sent me to Texas when I was seven years old. Mother had already been sent to Texas about two years before and Father was owned by another master. Being sent to Texas at this time I remained under the same master, R.D. Blackshear, until I received my freedom during the Civil War.

Having married in 1867 we remained in Texas until 1880, then we moved to Kansas where we lived ten years. In 1889 we took a place 7½ miles northwest of Guthrie.

At about the age of 30 while still in Texas I joined the M. E. Methodist church and later while living in Kansas I joined the Conference. As I was sincere in the cause that I thought was right I intended to devote all my time to the M. E. church as soon as my farm was set in order.

In the meantime Brother George Dansberger and wife and Sister Denny Casey were holding a meeting at the Lone Star School House, which was a white settlement, with the exception of family and myself. During the time of this meeting a white gentleman came across my farm and asked me if I had been out to the meeting. I

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asked him what meeting. He told me that some people were holding a meeting at the schoolhouse and that they said they were holiness people. Then I asked him if he believed a person could live holy. He said that one of the women said that she had not sinned for seven years. I inquired of him whether he believed it. He said that he believed she was right because of the way she looked when she said it. He told me to come out Sunday to the baptizing.

As some of my Methodist neighbors had joined their holy band, I went to the baptizing to see what they were doing. I being a minister of the Methodist church went there to protect my church.

Out of a gathering of about 400 wife and myself were the only colored people there. I took my seat in the amen corner that I might hear all that went on.

The minister taking the stand read his text and preached to it. I had been used to taking a text and preaching from it. He preached the Word throughout the sermon. While I went there to fight them yet I had no fight for the Word.

In the latter part of the sermon he said that some people wanted to know how to get into the Church. That was just what I wanted to hear, so with mouth and eyes open, I looked straight at him. He said. "Jesus says, 'I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall he saved,' and that just suits us: we leave that in Jesus' hand." Although I didn't acknowledge it, yet I was convinced that that was the way it should be.

Our youngest boy had a growth on his wrist the size of a goose egg. Wife sent him to a neighbor, who had been baptized by the people, to borrow some soda. The neighbor noticing the growth said to the boy, "I am going to ask the Lord to remove it from your arm." On returning home the child told his mother what had happened.

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One morning about three days after this, at the breakfast table one of the boys started laughing and upon being questioned of the matter he said, "That growth is gone from Ed's hand," and it was completely healed.

Shortly after this I accepted the truth and all the preach spirit that I had was all gone, and I felt that I would never preach again, for I was perfectly satisfied to live just as I was.

A considerable time after this the saints had a prayer meeting on Monday morning about one mile from our house. As we were invited we were anxious to attend. When we went in and began to sing the Spirit moved upon me to preach the first time since I had been saved.

While I was talking a white man who claimed to be an infidel, came in and sat on a nail keg. When I ended my sermon, he arose and said. "When I came in and sat on that nail keg I was a sinner, but now I am a child of God. You don't need to take my word for it, but I am going to prove it by my life." Following that we had an ordinance meeting and he observed it with us. The last I heard from him he was a minister in this reformation and still is as far as I know.

Later on many times I would hear of the saints as they were passing through Guthrie that they would buy a can of sardines, return thanks and eat them there on the street, often sleeping in large dry goods boxes. For this reason I bought a ten acre tract just west of town in order that they might have a place to stay. From that time until this all the saints have been welcome at our home.

In the horse and wagon days the saints living north and east especially around Ripley would stay all night at our house and drive on to Okla. City. The first Camp Meeting the saints had in

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this part of the country was held in Okla. City at Wheeler Park. There were about six wagons that made the trip, and on their return they would again stop at our house.

At one time we had a call for some of the elders from Guthrie to go 6 miles east of Orlando, Okla., to pray for a sister. As all the rest of the ministers at Guthrie were gone I was called upon to go. They said for me to come 6 miles due east from the depot at Orlando.

I arrived at the depot, and nobody was there to meet me, so I started walking. About half way I met a man in a spring wagon. He asked me to ride with him, but I told him I was going the other way. He insisted for me to get in and said that he would turn around and take me where I wanted to go.

He told me that the devil must have been in the horses because he had such a hard time catching them. As we went along the way he told me that he was from Kentucky, and that he had been raised not to allow a colored person to eat nor drink in his house. I answered that I was from Texas and that every man should have a rule to govern his home and that I had one.

He then said that it was his wife that I was going to pray for and proceeded to tell me that it was strictly a white settlement for eight miles around, and how it had been phoned all around that a colored man was coming to pray for his wife. He also said that it would be like a camp meeting gathering at his house because people were there from miles around in wagons, carts, on horseback and afoot to see what would happen.

When we came in sight of the house it was just as he had said. Not all could get in the house, for some were all about the yard. He tied his horses and went right in with me. There were so many

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people in the room and only one chair was there, so, he stood at the head of the bed and I sat down.

The Sister said in a low whisper, “Is this Bro. Winn?” I answered her that it was. Then she told me that she was **very** sick. Before praying for her the man asked where a certain scripture was that his wife wanted the night before. I gave him chapter and verse of the scripture that he might put it down. The Sister then said, “I knew it was there somewhere.”

I then read to her from the 5th chapter of the gospel of James—the Lord’s will concerning our healing. I anointed her and prayed for her according to the scripture and as I started to remove my hands the husband screamed in a loud voice, “My wife is healed; I know she is, for I can see the change already!” In five minutes the room was vacated, and the Sister arose, dressed and helped get dinner for the crowd of people.

Some six years later a white gentleman was sick about three miles north of the place just related. Wife and I were called to pray for him. We labored in prayer for three nights and days for him. He would receive help but was not healed; so we set a day of fasting which was on Sunday for his healing. When the appointed hour came we anointed him and prayed the prayer of faith, and God healed him instantly.

On Monday he felt like he wanted a quail or squirrel to eat; so I took his gun and went down on the draw. There was a small oak tree standing about fifty yards from the draw, so I went and sat down under it hoping that I might see a covey of quail running along or a squirrel jumping in the trees.

I sat there about two hours and decided to go back to the house as it was getting late. As I looked back I saw a squirrel sitting on

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the limb behind me about two feet—in hand reach of me. Three times I looked back and rubbed my eyes thinking I must have been asleep. I then walked away from the tree and shot the squirrel, and took it home for him to eat.

Other Experiences

We read in the Bible that the Lord is not slack concerning His promises and also that because the long suffering delays His coming, many would say, “Where is the promise of His coming?” We also read, “Be not ignorant of this one thing, that a thousand years with the Lord is as one day.” Truly all things will come to pass, as they are prophesied in the Bible.

In the early part of my life while yet in Texas. My cousin told me that he dreamed that he saw me preaching. He said that it was not preaching as they were accustomed to, but that it was on the train, preaching to white people. He said that it was good preaching, but that it was not like we hear now.

To show that prophesy is still being fulfilled as in Bible days, I will tell you how this came to pass.

About 40 years after my cousin told me this. I was returning from a reunion that President McKinley had held at Dallas for the purpose of restoring a friendly feeling between the north and south.

While coming home on the train, the coach being filled with passengers, I got up to get a drink of water and on returning to my seat two men were talking about me. (My sister and I were the only colored passengers aboard). One said to the other, “That is a Methodist brother,” the other said, “No, he is a Baptist brother.”

One asked me, “Brother aren’t you a Baptist?” I said, “You called me brother and that gives me the right to call you brother.

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Do you mean it? I love you just like I do anybody else.”

John tells us that we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. From then on for several hours, the Lord filled my soul and as I talked to the people, many were weeping. Many were convinced, and acknowledged that the hand of the Lord was upon me. When the train stopped at Gainesville, Texas, one man told me that he was a deacon of the Baptist church there, and if I ever came that way, call for his name and he would open the doors of the church and permit me to preach there. The same thing happened at Ardmore, Okla. On leaving the train another man told me that he was a deacon of the church at Ardmore, and said, “You are the kind of man we want and if you are ever in our town, I will open the church doors for you. You are welcome to preach to us.” The conductor was much impressed by the service, and as he came by, my ticket being in sight, took it, punched it and put it back in place to keep from interrupting me in my message. When we went to change cars he came to me and said, “You know I am in a rough place in this kind of work, please pray for me, I need your prayers.”

Truly I praise God for all the way He has led me and blessed me in His service.

Another experience I would like to relate to the glory of God. When I was a boy back in the days of slavery. I had a book in my hand one day trying to read, and my master came along and took it and burned it, saying that he didn't allow us with books. I held that in my heart against him until after I was saved. One day while I was in the field plowing the Lord spoke to me that he wanted me to go down in Texas and be reconciled with my master. I went to the house and spoke to wife about it and she got my clothes ready and I left the next day for Navasota, Texas. I saw my boss' son and told

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him to tell his father that I would be out the next day to see him. When I got to the farm, the old man, his son and the hired hand were plowing, each with one horse. The son said to his father, "There comes George." His father looked up and saw me and turned his horse loose and came running with his hands up and I ran and met him and we hugged each other and wept for quite a while. We sat and talked for four hours. I told him what I had thought about him for burning my book, but I could tell that it was because of the custom that he burned it, instead of ill will on his part, for he willingly gave lessons to the ex-slaves after that. We got *that* all cleared up and talked of the way of the Lord and the plan of salvation. He had been reading a religious paper that I had been sending him. He said, "You talk just like a paper I have been reading, since you have been talking, I have been saved. I was not saved when you first came, but I am saved now, and I promise you that I am going to live this life." I am glad to say that he lived it to the end. When he died his folks sent for me to come to his funeral, but I was not at home at the time, so did not get the word until it was too late, but I rejoice to know that he is numbered with the redeemed.

In order to show how the Lord impresses and leads His people I wish to tell an incident that happened at Dover, Okla., while I was there doing some baptizing.

The Rock Island Railroad crosses the Cimarron River at Dover. The river was full from bank to bank. As I was baptizing near the bridge I noticed that the coaches of the train seemed to quiver and shake as they crossed. The following Monday we came home on this same train, and again as we crossed I felt the unusual shaking. The engine and some of the coaches of the next train that started to cross plunged into the river taking the lives of many that

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were on board. Truly we can testify that the hand of the Lord is over his children to protect them.

We also wish to tell how the Lord supplied our needs. In the early days I filed on 160 acres of land northwest of Guthrie. I made our dugout and moved the family into it. Times were very hard and provisions were very scarce. Wife went to one of the neighbors and they gave her a cat that she brought home with her. The only opening for air that we had was eighteen inches by eighteen inches in the door that stayed open night and day.

The children had a pallet on the dirt floor to sleep on. Night after night this cat would bring a rabbit and put it at the children's feet. She would eat the heads off the rabbits, and leave the nice fat rabbit for us. After about three months of faithful service our cat disappeared. Early on the morning of the third day one of the boys called, "Papa! Papa! Come and see; here is a smart dog out here and he acts like he wants to go hunting." I got up, dressed and took my gun and brought back nine squirrels. So thus we were fed until we were able to have a pig in the pen.

We hired out two of our boys to work in Guthrie, which was 7 ½ miles from home. We had no wagon or horses so I would walk to Guthrie to take clean clothes for the boys every week and take the others home for washing. Many times in the winter I would make a trip with carpet rags around my feet for shoes. At the river I would wait until a large piece of ice would pass then wade the water. Often my clothes would be frozen when I reached town.

When it was time to roof my log house I would carry the shingles home with me one bunch at a time. One time as I started to Crescent to the store 4 miles away I noticed 3 or 4 shingle nails on the ground. Further investigation showed that they had been losing from a keg that had been hauled in a wagon. I picked them

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up as I went along, and with these nails I put the shingles on my house.

When I began this little writing I was in hopes that two saint ministers namely, Sister Lena Matheson and Sister Emily Turner would be permitted to read it, but now they have both passed on. Also our dear Brother Robinson, the Reformation Warrior has gone out to explore the great beyond prepared for those who endure until the end.

Many obstacles and hindrances have confronted us from time to time. By God's grace we are more than conquerors. One of my favorite songs, namely, "I'm Nearer my Home," is becoming more real to me each time I sing it, for I realize that one of these days I shall see heaven for myself.

GEORGE W. WINN

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Seventy Years

Seventy years of peaceful wedded life;
When they pledged to be true to each other,
When hand in hand, as husband and wife,
They went forward forsaking all other.

Seventy years together, to love and walk;
A beautiful ordinance instituted by God forever,
When God joined their hearts as in the Eden of love,
Man could part them asunder, no never.

Seventy years of happiness as onward they go;
With a love-cherished feeling of "Home sweet Home."
A heart-felt welcome of love is bestowed,
And a greeting given each friend as they come,

Seventy years spent in the service of God;
As commissioned they willingly went,
To fulfill their call, to teach and to preach,
Whithersoever the spirit them sent.

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Seventy years they faithfully stood at their post;
Not faltering to tarry for dross;
But laying their treasure up in heaven above;
They forsook all for the joy of the cross.

Seventy years! Shall they cease praising? No never!
But continue to tell the sweet story,
As God lends them breath, while years swiftly fly,
Spending all their life for His glory.

Many stars have been added that will shine in their crown
When upward they speed on their journey.
They will hear those glad words, "My servant well done,"
A mansion for you is waiting in glory.

Sister Emma Holden

*Composed for Bro. and Sister Winn
for their seventieth wedding anniversary.*

