

Pratt migration from Bibb Co. Alabama to Saline Co. Ark now Grant Co. Ark.

" FROM ALABAMA TO ARKANSAS: An 1841 Journey"

EDITOR'S NOTE: In 1841 Elder Joab Pratt left Bibb County, Alabama, with other families in a wagon train headed for Arkansas. The Pratts settled in Saline County Territory that later became Grant County. Pratt's Ferry, later known as Prattsville, bears their name today. Pratt also served as postmaster of Lost Creek Post Office in 1846. The following article regarding this journey originally appeared in the BIBB EAGLE in February, 1978, and was presented to the museum by Robert L. Crowson, a member of the Museum Guild and a former resident of Grant County.

In the early days, if things got very bad economically, folks were likely to hitch up and move on and things were extraordinarily bad in 1841. Many of the first settlers of Bibb County had been soldiers under General Andrew Jackson, and some of them first saw their future home sites while serving in the Indian Territory that was to become the state of Alabama.

But by 1837, General Jackson had become President Jackson, and quarrel with the National Bank kicked off a panic which eventually dislodged many people from the very land which his wartime victories had opened up for them. Collapse of the commodities markets followed on the heels of financial panic, and many farmers found themselves strapped.

So wagon trains began to form and move westward, leaving the land in many cases for creditors, tax collectors, and others to fight over. Stretched to the west was always new land for a fresh start in those days.

In the fall of 1841 such a wagon train left Bibb County bound for Arkansas Territory and that new chance. One of its organizers **was Elder Joab Pratt, one of the most energetic early Baptist preachers ever to ride horseback over the ridges of Bibb County. A son of Richard and Rebecca (Beavers) Pratt, early settlers of the River Bend Community, he was ordained at Enon Baptist Church in the early 1820's and could serve as the very model of the indefatigable preacher on horseback. His pastoral circuit by 1840** included Mt. Moriah and Haysop Churches in Bibb County and extended as far as Gilgal Church in Tuscaloosa County.

When economic disaster struck in 1841, Elder Pratt gathered stricken families from his several congregations and set out. Only sketchy facts are known about the trek [sic] to Arkansas, but the wagons headed southwest instead of northwest toward Arkansas as U. S. 82 does today. Possibly they followed the old salt trail which early settlers used to use when going to Louisiana for salt.

In any case, they did go to mid-Louisiana and then headed north. Pushing up through Louisiana, they came to the end of any sort of road at a point just below the Arkansas border. This point in Union Parish, Louisiana is still known locally as Alabama Landing. From there, the emigrants and the slaves they had brought along with them had to hack their way through what is now Union County, Arkansas. As they went, they noted that the soil was extraordinarily rich. But their destination was Saline Territory many miles to the north, and they continued their slow progress until they reached there by which time it was probably early spring and time to clear for their first crop.

In Saline Territory they founded the Philadelphia Baptist Church. This old church is still in existence, and some of the stones in its cemetery are marked with the names Mayfield, Pumphrey, McDaniel, Pratt, and Cobb, all traceable to early Bibb County.

The community which grew up near Philadelphia Church is known as Prattsville, now in Grant County. John Pratt, younger brother of Elder Joab Pratt, and his wife, the former Louisa Pumphrey, were leading citizens of the Prattsville Community. In the cemetery of old Philadelphia Church stand the markers of Berryman McDaniel (1788-1858) and his wife Sarah (1797-1845), former members of Mt. Moriah Church in Bibb County. Nearby are buried a number of their children: daughter Louisa and her husband, Nathan Pumphrey, a brother of Louisa Pumphrey Pratt; son Jordan McDaniel and his wife, the former Mary Shuttlesworth; son David McDaniel and his wife, the former Tabitha Ann Mayfield, all from Bibb County originally.

Bibb County records show that Nathan Pumphrey and Louisa McDaniel were married there by Elder Joab Pratt on 28 August 1834, long before the group thought of going to Arkansas. David McDaniel and Tabby Mayfield were married in 1844 in Arkansas. The names of their first three sons in order of their births reveal perhaps the relative rank of certain household heroes. First there was Joab Pratt McDaniel, born 1846; second, Andrew Jackson McDaniel, born 1851; and third, William Archibald McDaniel, born 1854 and named for his grandfather Archibald Mayfield who died in Alabama before 1835.

Elder Joab Pratt and some of the other families liked the land they had passed through on the way up from the Louisiana border, and by 1845 a number of them had moved southward and settled in Union County. Elder Pratt never forsook his calling, and it is a family tradition among the Union County Pratts that he preached the first sermon ever preached in the frontier town of El Dorado. The early Baptist congregation there met in the courthouse in bad weather and in the open when the weather was good. Today their descendants meet in the magnificent building which houses the First Baptist Church of El Dorado.

Always the circuit rider, Elder Pratt traveled all over Union County churches, some of them now extinct, show Elder Pratt as a presbyter or first pastor or sometimes both. Old Springhill Baptist Church, later known as Caledonia for the community in which it was located, appears to have been a center for former Bibb County folks. Elder Pratt was its first pastor and continued in service there for a number of years.

The old part of the Caledonia Baptist Cemetery contains the markers of Andrew Jackson Mayfield (1815-1859) and his wife, Rachel Cobb (1815-1885) who were married in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, on 9 September 1841, just before the wagon train left. A. J. Mayfield's brother, Elisha Mayfield, who stayed in Alabama, is buried at Old Union Baptist Church near Keeton's Corner in the Talladega National Forest. Rachel's sister Rebecca, who married Rev. Daniel Ward of Bibb County, is buried in the Ward family plot at Antioch Baptist Church in Bibb County. A. J. Elisha and Tabby Mayfield (of the Philadelphia Cemetery group) were children of Archibald and Tabitha Mayfield of Sardis Baptist Church just over the line in Tuscaloosa County. Their sister, Adaline Mayfield, married John H. Ward, ancestor of the Wards of Bethel Baptist Church and Brent in Bibb County.

A number of others who made the move to Arkansas left relatives in Bibb county, but contact between the families appears to have failed to survive the passing years. Elder Pratt himself was one of several children, and his brothers, Absolom and Hopkins Pratt, have many descendants in Bibb County. The Elder's wife, Frances Vernon was a daughter of Obadiah Vernon, many of whose descendants live in Bibb County, especially around Vernontown.

All of the children of Elder Pratt and his wife went to Arkansas except daughters Adeline and Maria who were married to Jesse Miller and John C. Goodson, respectively. Adeline Miller died immediately after

the birth of her only child, Joab Pratt Miller, in 1837. By the time the wagon train left, Jesse Miller was remarried to Edith Kornegay, and they remained in Alabama, but Ezekiel and Mary Miller, Jesse's parents, went to Arkansas. John C. and Maria (Pratt) Goodson raised a large family in Alabama, but by 1870 they, too, had moved with their children to Union County, Arkansas, where Goodson descendants are numerous today."

23 Jul 2011 story

This article appeared in the Grant County Museum's periodical Grass Roots. Permission to retype and submit on-line granted today, 4-20-2000 by phone from Mr. Elwin Goolsby, director. Hope this helps someone. P. J. Cowling

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## Public Comments (from all member trees)

[t\\_spurlock1](#) McDaniels to Alabama: This is not yet connected to my McDonalds, John Sherril, in Rockford, Coosa, AL but I believe & am trying to connect Berriman Edmond b. 1788; James; David C. and George A. b. 1809. I believe they are his brothers or cousins. Also, I have evidence from a second McDonald/McDaniel Bible that a David McDaniel, b. 1762, may be the father or uncle of these McDaniels. I am not sure why John Sheril McDonald would have changed the surname from McDaniel to McDonald, after they moved to AL but have evidence that this is what happened.

20 Mar 2012 • Flag • Hide

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## Migration from Bibb co., AL to Arkansas

### [WAGON TRAIN FROM BIBB COUNTY HAULED PIONEERS TO ARKANSAS](#)

Elisha mentioned in this story: The Elisha mentioned in this story is Elisha Bennett Mayfield, not Elisha M Mayfield.

"(Ed. note - This article was submitted by Robert Crowson from The Bibb

Eagle February, 1978. Bibb County, Alabama)

"Drive west from Centreville, Alabama on U.S. Highway 82 for a couple of days and you will be in El Dorado, county seat of Union County, Arkansas. Look in the phone book there and you might think you had never left Bibb County as you run down the list of familiar names.

The reason is very simple; many of Union County's first settlers came there more than a hundred years ago from Bibb County, Alabama. But when they set out by wagon train for Arkansas Territory in 1841, no one could say how long they would be traveling. They only knew it was a long and uncertain journey and hopes for a better life rode with them and kept them moving.

In those days, if things got very bad economically, folks were likely to hitch up and move on and things were extraordinarily bad in 1841. Many of the first settlers of Bibb County had been soldiers under Gen. Andrew Jackson and some of them first saw their future homesites while serving in the Indian Territory which was to become the state of Alabama.

But by 1837, Gen. Jackson had become President Jackson and (a) quarrel with the National Bank kicked off a panic which eventually dislodged many people from the very land which his wartime victories had opened up for them. Collapse of the commodities markets followed on the heels of financial panic and many farmers found themselves strapped.

So wagon trains began to form and move westward leaving the land in many cases for creditors, tax collectors and others to fight over. Stretched to the west was new land for a fresh start in those days.

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Always the circuit rider, Elder PRATT traveled all over Union County starting new congregations of Baptists. Records of at least half a dozen Union County churches, some of them now extinct, show Elder PRATT as a presbyter or first pastor or sometimes both. Old Springhill Baptist Church, later known as Caledonia for the community in which it was located, appears to have been a center for former Bibb County folks. Elder PRATT was its first pastor and continued in service there for a number of years.

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The Union County PRATTS of Arkansas and the Bibb County PRATTS of Alabama have held family reunions at their respective locations each summer for many years without either group being aware of each other. This year some of the Union County PRATTS were invited to the reunion in Bibb County. They didn't make it this year but contact has been renewed and Union County, Arkansas is "just a little piece" down U.S. 82 from Bibb County, Alabama in these times."

C.E.B.

PRATT, BEAVERS, MAYFIELD, PUMPHREY, MCDANIEL, COBB, SHUTTLESWORTH, WARD, VERNON, GOODSON, MILLER, KORNEGAY.

*source: <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ahopkins/hunsucker/migrations.htm>*