THE METHODIST CIRCUIT RIDER IN TEXAS, 
1865-1900

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface ........................................ 1
I. Texas Methodism ............................. 3
II. The Life of the Circuit Rider ............ 18
III. The Camp Meeting ........................ 43
IV. The Message of the Circuit Rider ....... 54
V. The Significance of the Circuit Rider .... 66
Appendix I. Methodist Circuits in Texas .... 71
Appendix II. Salary of J. H. Hills .......... 73
Notes ........................................... 74
Bibliography ................................... 87
Several years ago, while studying the background of some of the members of my own family who had been post bellum Methodist circuit riders in Texas, I found that very little information was available concerning the itinerant preachers in this state. Upon questioning people who had grown up in the less densely populated areas of East Texas, I soon learned the tremendous importance that they attached to the traveling ministers. Combining the lack of general information with the individual local respect for these men, it was not difficult to realize that an important facet of Texas culture was about to be lost for future students of religious and social history. Accordingly, when the opportunity presented itself, I determined to preserve as much of this material as possible. The success of this work is dependent on the degree that I have been able to keep the circuit rider from sinking into oblivion.

Many people have helped in the preparation of this thesis. Without the encouragement and constructive suggestions of Dr. Edward H. Phillips, my faculty advisor at The Rice Institute, the work could never have been begun and certainly never completed. I am very grateful to Bishop A. Frank Smith for setting me on the paths which led to sources of very valuable material. Reverend Charles F. Smith, a perfect example of the finest of the saintly circuit riders, spent many
hours in reminiscence with me; it would have been impossible to have understood the itinerant preacher without the enjoyable discussions I had with him.

Dr. Robert E. Ledbetter of the Methodist Student Center at the University of Texas is the leading historian of Texas Methodism at the present time. He was kind enough to allow me to use his own material and also directed me to several important manuscript collections which proved invaluable. The staffs of the Fondren Library of the Rice Institute, the Barker Texas History Center of the University of Texas, and the Texas State Library have been most kind and helpful. Finally, thanks are owed to the members of my family who have been a tremendous aid in the preparation of this thesis, my grandmother, Mrs. Sallie E. Mills, for reminiscences, and my parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Mills, for checking the original draft and making many valuable suggestions.

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CHAPTER I

TEXAS METHODISM

"And he went from year to year in circuit...."  
I Samuel 7:16

Protestant religious growth in Texas would not have developed in the way it did had it not been for the institution of the Methodist circuit rider. However, the system of itinerant ministers was not unique to one state or region, nor was it limited by the time span considered in this work, 1865-1900. Indeed, it had begun in the late eighteenth century in England and spread to the United States soon after the American Revolution. With the advance of the frontier, the circuit riders accompanied the first settlers into the Middle West and were in this area in large numbers by the time of the Civil War. The use of the itinerant system in Texas is peculiar only in that it began later than in most other regions and the conditions under which it thrived continued considerably longer, with the result that the circuit riders played their greatest role in Texas during the post bellum period. However, traveling preachers were not suddenly deposited in Texas on the day that Lee surrendered. For this reason, if we are to understand our subject, we must turn to a brief study of Methodism in Texas.

Under Mexican rule, the Protestant religions were prohibited in Texas. Although anxious to encourage
American colonization before 1830, the Mexican government insisted that all who came to live in Texas must swear allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. In practice, this law was usually not enforced, and a person did not have to practice Catholicism actively to satisfy the authorities. However, in spite of the fact that a colonist was not usually troubled about his religious beliefs if he kept quiet about them, the Protestant faiths were most certainly not allowed to send ministers or other representatives to Texas. This restriction was one of the grievances which some of the settlers had against Mexico. The first Americans had settled in the northeast portion of the Mexican colony, believing that that area was under the jurisdiction of the United States. These people were especially desirous to have Protestant worship services, and it was to these settlers that the first Methodist ministers came in violation of the laws of Mexico. William Stevenson, coming in 1815, was the first Methodist who is known to have preached in what is now Texas. Nine years later, Henry Stephenson preached near San Augustine and in 1833 James P. Stevenson held camp meetings in the eastern part of the state. The following year, Henry Stephenson returned and established McMahan Chapel, the oldest continuous Protestant church in Texas. In the same year, while Texas was still
under Mexican rule, Stephenson received the first official appointment to the state. \(^{11}\) By the time Texas declared her independence, there was already an active, though suppressed, Methodist background in the state.

Soon after freedom from Mexico was attained, a mission was established in Texas. \(^{12}\) To a large extent, this station was the result of the efforts of three men: Dr. Martin Rater, first superintendent of the Texas Mission; Littleton Fowler, the second superintendent; and Robert Alexander, the first Methodist minister to come officially to the state. \(^{13}\) It was soon realized that more men were needed and Fowler wrote, "Brethren and Fathers! not only pray for us, but send us ministers without delay—they are much needed." \(^{14}\)

In 1838, the itinerant system was actually begun in Texas when the Texas Mission Circuit was formed by the Mississippi Conference of the Church. \(^{15}\) By this action five circuits were created in the state—a modest beginning for what was to be such a large organization of traveling preachers.

It will be well at this point to examine the system of government in the Methodist Church so that we may understand the "chain of command" under which a circuit operated. \(^{16}\) A number of churches or circuits formed a district with a district superintendent in charge. This man was the immediate superior of the circuit rider.
For all practical purposes, the district was an administrative unit. A large number of districts were combined to form a conference. A bishop was in charge of several conferences and was the supreme administrative and disciplinary officer for them. Each of these units held business meetings from time to time and every four years a General Conference was held by delegates from the individual conferences. This meeting formed the law making body of the Church and was the only central authority of the Church. As far as the itinerant preacher was concerned, the power ran from conference to district to circuit or from bishop to district superintendent to circuit rider. The value of this type of administrative machinery in a newly developed area was explained by John M. Barous:

"The machinery and peculiar genius of Methodism has made her always, especially adapted to pioneer work. Where other churches have had to wait for communities to be settled, churches to be built and calls to be extended to the ministers, Methodism has sent her preachers to help settle the communities, to build the churches or to preach to the people without any church houses. Her ability to do this grows out of the fact that her itinerancy is a military system, so that those in authority may say to this man 'go' and he goeth and to this man 'come' and he cometh."17

The first five circuits, which we mentioned, constituted the first district in Texas, the San Augustine District. Within a year it was necessary to create a second district and the year after that the first conference, the
Texas Conference, was established with eighteen preachers.\textsuperscript{18} By 1840, with this action, the machinery of church administration in Texas was completed.

The ante bellum years were a time of steady expansion for Methodism in Texas. By 1844 there were about forty circuit riders in the state, and it was decided that it was necessary to expand with the creation of a second conference.\textsuperscript{19} Accordingly, the East Texas Conference was formed with twenty-eight traveling preachers.\textsuperscript{20} Although this administrative growth seemed adequate at the time, it was only fourteen years before a third conference was established with the Rio Grande, or what is now called the West Texas Conference.\textsuperscript{21} By the time the war started, there were nearly thirty thousand Church members in Texas and the Methodists owned property which was assessed at three hundred and fifty-eight million dollars.\textsuperscript{22} It must have seemed in 1860 as if the future of Methodism was so bright that nothing could slow the development of that body.

Nevertheless, four years of war shattered the rosy picture. In 1866 only seventeen thousand members remained and the value of Church property had dwindled to one hundred and twenty-three million dollars.\textsuperscript{23} Many church buildings and parsonages had suffered the ravages of weather while they had been vacated by preachers who had joined the Confederate Army. In other cases, there was destruction of church property by northern soldiers. In Galveston,
for example, troops carried off doors from the academy and parsonage to use for kindling wood. 24

The Methodist Church in the South found itself in a very bad financial condition when the economy of the Confederacy collapsed. Not only were assets in Southern bonds lost, but the Church owed a huge missionary and publishing house debt which it had intended to pay in Confederate funds. 25 Now there was no money, but the creditors still demanded their payment. The result was that an already impoverished Church was forced to begin life anew with a debt which would take many years of hard work to liquidate.

It seems likely that in so far as the Texas circuit rider was concerned the spiritual losses were far greater than the physical destruction. Many itinerant ministers had joined the Confederate Army, either as chaplains or as regular soldiers. 26 This, of course, left the churches and circuits of the South woefully undermanned. In some cases appointments were enlarged so that the few remaining preachers could cover the vacancies left by their soldier comrades. In other instances, however, no men were available under any conditions to fill the unoccupied appointments, and small circuits and communities often were left without spiritual aid for many months or even years. 27 Some people, who had been carefully trained and strengthened by the circuit riders before the war, reverted to
their nonreligious ways in the absence of the itinerant ministers.

The worse aspect of this lack of spiritual guidance was that it came at the time when it was most needed. In the absence of restraints, animosity was only too easily produced between Southern citizens and certain people with whom they came in contact during the course of everyday life. In the first place, a defeated society, composed of many Confederate veterans, had no love for the Union soldiers who were sent to occupy their state. Even when circuit riders were present, they often shared the tempers of their more hot-blooded neighbors. An example of this attitude is found in the case of Henry W. South, who refused to take up his appointment at the conference of 1868. He explained that Union men and Republicans were in the ascendency on the San Gabriel Circuit and he "...did not relish their company."28

The freed Negroes were the second large class whose presence was, from a religious standpoint, a constant irritant to many of the white people of the South. In the ante bellum period the religious instruction of the slaves had been in the hands of the white churches; now separate colored Methodist Churches were established and the Northern branch of the Methodist Church, whose rivalry we shall discuss later, did everything in its power to organize these new Churches as a part of their body.29
In this way, antipathy for the Northern interlopers was combined with dislike for the separate Negro Church.

The strong sense of uncertainty which followed in the immediate wake of the war led to an increased emphasis on material wealth. In a very real sense, this was necessary since in many cases it was a struggle to provide the bare necessities of life during those years. The result was that for several years after the war little support or interest was given to the circuit rider. In 1865, Peter Gravis wrote that,

"The finances of the country were below anything that I had ever known. The war between the North and South had just closed. There was no merchandise in the country, and if there had been, there was no money but Confederate money, which was worth nothing. During this year I did not see ten dollars in good money. Cattle was our exchange. When men began to bring dry goods into the country, we exchanged cattle for them. I received for my services on the mission, corn, wheat and cattle—using the yearlings for small change."

The lack of interest in the affairs of the circuit rider was not helped by the fact that many Southerners who had believed that the lost cause for which they fought was morally right tended to think that their God had left them. This attitude was probably more prevalent in Texas in the immediate post bellum period than in most other Southern states, for this state had not been hard hit by the ravages of war. Therefore, the excesses of Reconstruction were a particularly sudden and severe blow to Texans. The absence of regard for spiritual matters was expressed
in the Report on the State of the Church in 1867:

"The finances drag heavily. There is a deficiency in almost every circuit and station. There is but little interest in church property. Not one tenth of the Methodist families take church papers. The war did much toward demoralizing the Church. Military rule operates much against religious influences, stirs up bad passions, produces disquietude and induces the people to feel the necessity to husband all their means for personal protection. They know not what is coming and feel that all things are uncertain. The unprecedented sickness of the past year has interfered greatly with the ministration of the word. The Indian depredations of the frontier have driven the preachers from their fields of labor; poverty has crippled others in their work and forced them to seek sustenance by other means than the gospel." 31

It is worth observing that the time limitations of this period of uncertainty are clearly marked by the fact that the report for the following year (1868) indicated that "The spiritual winter is passing away." 32 Perhaps the discouragement of post bellum religious activity was most clearly expressed when Joel T. Daves wrote to another circuit rider,

"I want to get away from the deathly influence, from the night moss that's resting on the 'Sunny South'—'Sunny' no more—and get away from 'the conflict of races' that is as inevitable as fate." 33

The competition of the Northern branch of the Methodist Church has been mentioned with respect to the religious instruction of the freed Negroes. 34 This body was not content, however, to stop with attempts at obtaining the support of the ex-slaves. In some of the cities of the southeast the Northern Methodists, with the support of Stanton and the army, had forcibly occupied Southern
Methodist pulpits. Although this particular form of interference did not take place in Texas, it was a bitter point with Methodists throughout the South and the simple knowledge of the action worked to create animosity in Texas.

The leadership of the Northern Church considered Texas a key in their program to control the Church in the South. In 1867, a Northern Methodist Conference was organized in Texas. As late as 1879 the outside body was still striving to fit the people of Texas into its plans. Some idea of the importance that the Northern group attached to the control of Texas from a religious as well as a political viewpoint may be gained from the statement of Bishop Haven of that body:

"Here then, ye men of the colder North, set up your penates...occupy the land.... Surround our still unrepentant States with this cordon of love. Thus you will free America from the fear of the reoccupancy of the seats of national authority with its unreconstructed enemies. Texas is to be the ransomer of America. It is to be the future fighting ground of union and disunion, of Northern and Southern ideas. It is to be the field where the rebellious and slavery-loving and feudal-holding systems are to meet freedom and equality in stirring, if not in bloody conflict. It is to be the coming Kansas in our coming war."

The combination of the spiritual and political aims of the Northern Church reached a climax when in Texas, as in other Southern states, ministers engaged in political activities under the carpet-bag government that existed
Although the actual interference by the Northern Church in the affairs of the Southern was relatively small in Texas, it exerted an effect far greater than its physical accomplishments. The very presence of the Northern group created continual dissent which prevented the energy of both Churches from being directed toward the creative efforts which were so badly needed in the immediate post bellum years.

The major physical change that affected the circuit rider in Texas during the first two decades after the Civil War was the breaking up of the plantations. From a consideration of ease of travel, the small farms that replaced the ante bellum agricultural system were a hindrance to the itinerant preacher. In days when travel was at best a slow and laborious process, the appearance of many small fields enclosed by fences was an added handicap. Many areas that had remained open were finally cut up into workable tracts after the famine of 1885 made the cultivation of new regions necessary. After that date, the barbed wire fence may be considered a permanent hindrance to the free travel of the circuit rider in most parts of Texas.

The disadvantages of post bellum enclosure to the itinerant minister were more than compensated for by the gains that he was able to make because of the breaking up
of the plantation land system. The creation of many small farms where there had been only one large manor type establishment meant that there would be many more people to receive the ministrations of the traveling preacher. Even more important than their numbers was the fact that these new tillers of the soil were exactly the type of people that the circuit rider could best serve. Usually poor and having large families and little or no education, these farmers were the basis of the congregations that were the most anxious to hear the emotional message of the itinerant minister. It would not be over-emphasis to say that the small scale dirt farmer made the circuit rider of post bellum Texas what he was. It was to this type of man, who arose from the enclosure of the Texas fields, to whom the traveling preacher directed his sermons, his camp meetings, his services, and, as we shall see, in many cases his life.

As the people of this state began to recover from the initial shock of Reconstruction, they began to look for something upon which they could place their trust. The old social order on which their faith had rested for generations was gone. The leadership of the plantation owners was destroyed. The easy way of life to which few belonged, but to which many aspired, was lost. The physical luxuries that had often been a basis of some sort of faith had long since disappeared. What then, if anything,
could be salvaged from the ruins of the old economy to provide a basis for the new life? The people to whom the circuit rider went gradually began to turn to the one thing on which their religion could stand: the moral issues of life. This new foundation of life tended to produce a conflict between the struggle for material well-being, which had been predominant in the immediate postbellum years, and the maintenance of the old moral standards. The result was that a renewed interest was shown in the work of the circuit rider and many people turned to him to help solve the problems which faced them.

Before we turn to a study of the circuit rider himself, it would be well to look briefly at the major events in Texas Methodism during the years that we are going to consider.

We have already seen that the last General Conference held before the war created a third annual conference for Texas, the Rio Grande or West Texas Conference. During the war years, the administrative forces of the Church in this state had gone along with little change. No bishop visited Texas during the years of conflict to determine the needs of administration. The local ministers realized even before the end of the war that the conference structure of Texas was badly in need of expansion. Accordingly, in 1866, a new conference, the Northwest Texas Conference, was formed with thirty-eight traveling
The following year, the North Texas Conference was created. This action made a total of five conferences in the state, a number which has proven adequate to this day.

A blow of major proportions hit all of Texas, both clerical and lay, in the yellow fever epidemic of 1867. In the midst of Reconstruction, this must have seemed to be the final burden. Fourteen Methodist preachers died from the disease. Records show that many of these clerical fatalities were among ministers who could have left the worse stricken areas, but elected to remain with the people they served. We shall find that this sort of devotion was usually a characteristic of the circuit rider.

The post bellum period was one of expansion to the West and Northwest in Texas. The eastern portion of the state was fairly well settled before the Civil War began. While, in traditional fashion, the circuit rider moved into the new areas with the first settlers, it was in the semi-populated districts that his greatest success was to be found. In Texas, the itinerant preacher was primarily a servant of the agricultural community and although he went to the ranch areas of the western part of the state, the greatest concentration of traveling ministers during these years was in the East. Actually, movement into unsettled areas was small until after the removal of the Indian menace in 1874. The end of this danger, coupled with the development of
Texas railroads in the eighties, was the key that opened the new areas of the state to settlement. In some cases, the Church almost moved too fast in attempting to provide religious services for the first settlers. In 1880, for example, an attempt was made to organize a Panhandle District. It took only a year, however, to discover that this was a premature effort and the district was discontinued. The Church could move in with the congregations, but not before them.

There were two principal objectives of the circuit riders in Texas during the latter half of the nineteenth century. First, the itinerant preacher had to work to overcome the bad effects left by the Civil War. This was his chief concern between the end of the war and about 1880. After that date, the aim of the Church was directed toward expansion into previously unsettled regions of the state. This was a gradual movement and continued well into the present century. During the period under consideration the membership of the Methodist Church in Texas was increased by about 300,000 people. By 1900, about twenty-five percent of the total population of Texas was Methodist. Outside the cities, this growth was almost entirely the work of the circuit riders. How did these men accomplish this expansion? To this question we may now turn our attention as we examine the life of the circuit rider.
"...they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."
Hebrews 11:38

The circuit rider lived his occupation. By its very nature, the serving of semi-isolated communities, the duties of the itinerant preacher were his chief concern twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Thus, the actual life of these men was a part of their work; and, conversely, their work was a part of their life. In order to successfully understand the accomplishments of these traveling preachers, we must seek to answer certain questions about their personality. What were their joys? What were their sorrows? Where did they come from? What did they want of life?

The itinerant preachers of Texas cannot be classified in any set and narrow pattern. If there were certain traits and aspects of heritage which many of these people had in common, there were many exceptions to any rule which may be formulated to define the "typical circuit rider." However, realizing that no generalizations can be universally true in this case, we can establish characteristics which are acceptable in a large number of instances.

The itinerant preacher was often from a deeply religious background. It was not unusual to see a traveling parson who was following in his father's footsteps, or more accurately
in the hoofprints of his father's horse. O. A. Fisher, one of the better known of these men, came from a circuit rider parenthood. One of my own ancestors, Moses Mills, was the son of one of these men, and, himself, became the father of a minister. The religious influence did not have to take the form of actual itinerant preaching.

Oscar M. Addison, one of the comparatively few circuit riders whose private papers are available for study, was a member of a family that provided three sons for this work. Their father was not a preacher, but he did give the land for one of the first camp grounds in Texas.

In some cases the religious stimulation came from outside the family. Charles F. Smith, certainly one of the few surviving circuit riders of this period, was inspired by his teacher, a part time traveling preacher who taught school to provide the support for his family that he could not obtain from his circuit. This attraction was not so much the result of the instructor's zeal, perhaps, as the fact that he knew prominent people in local and state politics and that he was a "fine reader." In other words, he was cultured, well educated, well known—the type of person that inspires the admiration of a young man. The significant point is that although the particular source of the religious impulse might vary, it was usually a single person who had an important part in the formative years of the young circuit rider.
At this particular time the Methodist itinerant in Texas was quite often a man who had spent his early life in some other state, usually in Kentucky, Tennessee, or the deep South. This was especially true of the older circuit riders in the immediate post bellum years. The reason for this out-of-state origin becomes clear when one realizes that the population of Texas was less than a million before the 1870's. Even at that, the greatest percentage increase in the state's population took place in the decade of the Civil War. There were comparatively so few people in Texas before the war that the chances were that a person of thirty or forty years of age almost certainly had not been born in this state. Naturally, a preacher of the second generation following the conflict stood a much better chance of having been a native Texan. It is probable that by 1900 the majority of the circuit riders then in service had come from the state in which they worked.

The period of service of James T. Hosmer was probably typical of a great many itinerants. He was born in Alabama in 1848, converted at the age of ten, entered the ministry at twenty-six, and came to Texas five years later. Going into the dugout area of Northwest Texas, Hosmer's health was wrecked after eleven years and he was forced to retire. He died in 1893, at the early age of forty-five. Of course, there were exceptions, especially in the more settled areas
where the circuits were not as large, but it was almost physically impossible for a man to last very long on the wide open circuits of West and North Texas.

As a rule, the circuit rider was largely self-educated. Although the Methodist Church operated several small colleges in Texas during the post bellum period, it was not until 1873 that it established its first strong seminary, Southwestern University at Georgetown. The traveling preacher usually began his calling with no more training in formal subjects than that described by Peter Cartwright when he wrote of another era:

"A Methodist preacher in those days, when he felt that God had called him to preach, instead of hunting up a college or Biblical Institute, hunted up a hardy pony of [sic] a horse, and some traveling apparatus, and with his library always at hand, namely, Bible, Hymn Book, and Discipline, he started, and with a text that never wore out nor grew stale, he cried, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.'"

In many cases this was just as well, for the usual audience of the circuit rider was not trained to understand a learned discourse any more than he was equipped to deliver one. These men tended to believe that their time would be more valuable if spent in service rather than in formal preparation. Henderson has noted quite well that the traveling preacher of any period tends to feel that the experience of conversion, often interpretation of sickness, dreams, trials, or the like, is a "call" which qualifies him to begin preaching at once. In this way, the Texas circuit rider followed
closely Wesley's motto, "Learning is good, saving souls is better."11

This is not to say that all of these men were untrained or that even those who did lack formal education did not feel the need of what they had missed. Merle Curti has suggested that the later emphasis which the Baptists and Methodists placed on education indicates that the apparent early indifference was born of a desperate and immediate need for men who could not be supplied if training was maintained.12 The importance which at least some of these ministers attached to the products of learning is indicated in a letter written to a circuit rider in 1865 in which the anonymous author says:

"I must say I differ with you with regard to this 'off hand' style of composition. ...We need to exercise our mental faculties a little more industriously than we have in the past. ...This motto, I think will ever stand, 'The mind's the standard of the man.'"13

Dudley Turner Brown was an example of the rather uncommon itinerant preacher who educated himself in the fundamentals of what is usually considered higher learning. Coming to the rough North Texas Conference in 1889, this unusual minister even taught himself some of the elements of Greek and Latin.14 We may say that the circuit rider was often one of two very different types of men, the man who had little formal training and desired none, or the man who had equally little education but wished for much more.
In this later period, the Methodist circuit rider was usually a family man. Although there was never any prohibition against clerical marriage in this body, the first itinerants in America often remained single. They felt that there was little place for a wife and children in the life of a man who never really had an established place that he could call home. The traveling preachers of Astbury's day considered not only the hardships which their wives would have to face; they were thinking also that a family would hold them closer to one place and thus impair their value to the Church.

By the late sixties, the itinerant minister's ideas on this subject had changed completely. He now looked upon a family not only as a thing of value, but almost as a necessity. In the first place, the circuit rider usually felt the need of the spiritual comforts of a home. He felt, quite justly, that he should not be denied the love and joys of the life which he recommended to others. An occasional zealot, in the tradition of earlier days would wonder as did Joel T. Davos,

"But Oscar the question comes up, are we entitled to the comforts of home? Ought we not as others, as the great examples of Methodism, to go forth, with full confidence in God, and give our all of time, comfort, etc., to Him who hath called us?" 15

In spite of exceptions, most of these men were very human in their desire for a private home life.

As we shall note later in more detail, the circuit
rider was often forced to turn to farming as a side line to obtain the very necessities of life. As he did this, more and more time was taken from what he considered to be his primary work, preaching. It is obvious, then, that if he had a family that could handle the farm, he could devote more time to the service in which he was interested. This was probably one of the reasons that most of these men, consciously or not, married early and had large families. For example, J. H. Mills married at the age of nineteen and had eight children. This was the case with most of the traveling preachers of this time and it was very unusual to find one of them who did not have a family.

Quite apparently, this was not work for people who were not deeply religious. In general, these men were concerned not with this life, but, as Barcus points out, with "a crown hereafter." In almost these very words, C. A. Fisher wrote in 1861:

"Sometimes my heart almost fails me in my work for God and labor for souls. But I hope to be faithful until death that I may receive a crown of life."

In an almost mystical approach to their assignments these itinerants usually accepted them without asking questions. When Oscar M. Addison heard that he was to be appointed to a circuit that he did not want, he prayed that his services might be used where they would do the most good. We have his own record that when the unwanted duty was announced, "I felt submissive and accepted my work as from
In this connection it is important to realize that this particular preacher was a much more practical man than many of the others. He was not the type of person who was accustomed to practice complete abandonment of self. In fact, he might be compared to John Thomason's Praxiteles Swan who "...was never able to associate starvation, even the genteel starvation of the Methodist preacher, with a state of grace." Since Addison, who could never be described as an unpractical zealot, was determined that if it was at all possible, his duty, his sense of service, must come before all else, we may say that this was a characteristic of most post bellum circuit riders.

What, then, were the duties of a circuit rider? For purposes of simplification we may consider them in two categories, those covered, either directly or indirectly, by the Discipline and those not enumerated, but certainly an integral part of the itinerant's work.

Of course, the most obvious duty covered by the instructions given to the traveling preacher was simply that which bade him hold services of worship at definite places at regular intervals. These preaching stations, taken together, constituted the itinerant's circuit. The number of locations varied with the population of the particular area. In the semi-settled parts of East Texas the usual circuit consisted of four stations, each of which the preacher would visit once a month. Sometimes, in the more
crowded areas, there would be only two sites, and the circuit rider would get to them twice a month. In the places where the population was very scattered, like the Panhandle, a normal load for one of these men would be six stations, or even more. These were the most important stops on an itinerant's round and it was at these places, where there was usually some sort of a church building, that he would preach on Sundays. During the week, the traveling preacher often would make a large number of stops at less important settlements where there was not a church, and an individual's home was used as a meeting place. These stops were usually arranged by the circuit rider himself and not assigned by the bishop as a regular part of the round. In general, most of these unofficial stations were in the more sparsely settled regions and, therefore, the more regular preaching stations a traveling minister had, the more unofficial stops he was likely to have also.

The second important duty of the circuit rider was to hold marriage and funeral services. In those days of poor transportation and even worse communication these ceremonies often had to wait some time until the preacher came around. The general agreement of the Methodist doctrine with other Protestant faiths permitted many people who did not belong to the Methodist Church to use its services. This was especially true in the case of these special rites.

Preaching to small congregations, the circuit rider
was well known by his flock and they came to him in times of trouble and need. Because of this close relationship, the traveling preacher acted as an advisor and instructor to his people. Related closely to the calling of the minister in time of need was the visitation by the circuit rider of congregational members in their homes. This was one of the cardinal tenets of Methodist instruction and was one of the causes of the close ties which existed between the circuit rider and the people he served. This was a personal religion in which the servant of God was a good friend as well as a minister.

In a very practical sense the circuit rider was in charge of the membership of his various stations. The first obligation of this supervision was to admit members to the Church. Conversely, the preacher was also charged with the expulsion of members. Happily, cause for the removal of membership was very rare. The two principal reasons for taking this action were immorality and debt cases not at law, which were apparently referred to a committee of arbitration. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Church was treated as immorality. If a member was charged with a deed of misconduct which could result in expulsion, he was tried before a committee of between five and thirteen members summoned by the preacher in charge. The trial was conducted in the manner of that before a court of law with the minister acting
Another administrative duty of the circuit rider was that of holding quarterly conferences when a presiding elder was not available. This was a meeting of the lay officials of all the churches in a circuit. Its purpose was to hear complaints, supervise Sunday schools, and admit new preachers. From a practical point of view the sessions of this body were not usually very important, since it ordinarily had very little business to transact.

The final supervisory duty of the itinerant was that of keeping the records of his circuit. Usually this was little more than a list of members. Of course, any sort of disciplinary action taken by the preacher was included also, as were the proceedings of the quarterly conference whenever the circuit rider presided.

A less formal duty, and certainly one that occupied a great amount of the traveling preacher's time, was the distribution of books and other church literature to the people in the minister's charge. Naturally, the Bible, or at least the New Testament, was the volume most commonly given out. This was followed by the Discipline, hymn books, and various tracts. As a rule, all of the books which the circuit rider carried were very small, about four by six inches and not over an inch in thickness. The reason for the diminutive size becomes apparent when one remembers that the smaller the book, the more copies could be carried.
in a pair of saddle bags. These works were usually purchased on credit by the individual preacher. He then distributed them to his congregations, accepting payment for them when the individual could afford to pay. This practice often meant that the traveling ministers incurred long-standing publishing house debts. Reverend Charles Smith relates that he owed a bill of fifty-two dollars for this type of publication when he came to Texas in the '80's and was quite worried lest the bishop find out about it before he could settle the account. Someone finally paid a pledge of fifty dollars owed to Smith and, although the circuit rider had little money to live on, he promptly sent it to the publishers.33

The itinerant preacher was expected to raise money for special causes such as the Missionary Board of the Church and the American Bible Society.34 Needless to say, the amounts obtained from people who simply did not have much money to give were often pitifully small. In his diary, O. B. Fisher records a time in 1876 when he asked a meeting for contributions for Coronal Institute and received a total of eighty cents. He adds that he "Rode home, 12 miles through a fierce wind."35--hard work for eighty cents.

So much for the things that were officially expected of a circuit rider. There were two other duties which may be stated very briefly. The first was simply to carry the word of God to the people, wherever they might be. The
second, which in a sense may be considered part of the first, was to hold camp meetings. As we study the hardships which these men faced, we shall see that the very act of getting to the people often involved a terrific amount of physical sacrifice. We shall note also, that in the tradition of the "Great Awakening," the camp meeting was an integral part of the traveling preacher's work.

We have intimated that the Methodist circuit rider of this period was often hard put to provide the bare necessities of life for himself and his family. How, then, did these people manage to live? Actually, their incomes came in varying amounts from four sources, salary, parsonage, gifts, and outside work.

The itinerant preacher did have a set salary which he was supposed to receive regularly. In the West and Northwest Texas Conferences, aid was obtained from appropriations made by the Parent Board of Missions at Nashville. Some of the stations on the frontier were helped by the Church Extension Board. Nevertheless, the individual preacher was always expected to raise the greater part of his wages from the people whom he served.

A circuit that was supposed to pay seven hundred dollars a year was an exception. In the twenty years between 1880 and 1900, J. M. Mills' established salary ranged from $450 to $700. However, he seldom received the total set amount.37

[See Appendix II] In 1874, O. N. Addison wrote that "I am
pleased with my work. My circuit allowed me last year $700 and paid me $550.  Six years later he described the financial state of the Carlton Circuit in graphic terms:

"I had not made the round of my circuit before I discovered that instead of supporting me, my people could hardly live themselves, and that instead of being burdened with a man of family, the circuit should have been made a mission or a single man sent to it, for, in addition to the general failure of crops in this section last year, the people of my circuit had for 2 successive years previously made nothing. ...I was compelled to serve the work from home though the nearest appointment was 35 miles distant and the roads rough. ...For the first Quarters service I received from the Carlton Circuit $13.65, over $6 of which were expended during that time for traveling and expenses."59

All during these years Addison's life must have been a hard struggle, for as early as 1868, while on a trip over his circuit, he had written his wife,

"We must husband every dollar we have (which are not very many now) and learn to do without money. Do not let a pound of salt or coffee go to anybody."40

It is apparent that the money which a circuit rider received from his charge was not enough to sustain the life of either himself or his family.

In some fortunate circuits a parsonage was provided for the lucky preacher who happened to serve that body. During the period immediately after the Civil War, very few traveling ministers were so admirably situated. In most cases the itinerant simply had to provide a house of his own or board with someone else. This often meant an added burden for these men, since in this situation, the place where they
lived was sometimes far from where they preached and extra miles were added to their already long rounds.

It was very common for a preacher to receive at least part of his salary in produce or in gifts. The circuit rider came to expect to be "pounded" when he assumed a new charge and at intervals thereafter. In 1867, Peter Gravis noted that he "received about one hundred dollars in truck and trade for my year's work." This must have been a good year for presenting the circuit rider with what he needed, for Andrew Jackson Potter tells how, at the end of a quarterly meeting at Bandera in the same year, one "old sinner" got up and said,

"Hold on, friends—I have something to say before you dispense. We goats here have given one preacher a suit of clothes; now come up you sheep, and give Mr. Potter a suit. Don't delay; bring up your money; don't let the goats out-shear you!"

Potter adds, "That brought the fleece from the sheep—I got the clothes, ready-made."

Not all of these men were willing to accept gifts. Reverend Charles Smith relates that before he came to Texas he was given a pony by the operator of a livery stable. At the same time he got his harness and saddle bags from his brother. When he left a year later to come to this state, he returned the pony and equipment to the man who had presented them to him. He considered the harness to be a sort of payment. Mr. Smith is very anxious to point out that he never expected special favors or gifts and he frowns on
preachers who did.\textsuperscript{44}

However, even the salary, the gifts, and the parsonage, if any, were often not enough to provide food and clothing for the troubled circuit rider. Almost without exception, every one of these men was forced to turn to some outside occupation to provide a small supplementary income. Horace Bishop's wife sewed to pay the grocery bills. Bishop himself noted in 1883 that,

"All preachers except one are engaged in something else to help support their families. One is cutting and hauling cord wood with a poor pair of ponies."\textsuperscript{45}

Teaching school seems to have been a rather popular sideline for many circuit riders. Mention has been made of the fact that Charles Smith's teacher in Mississippi was an itinerant preacher who acted as an instructor to raise extra money.\textsuperscript{46} Oscar M. Addison's brother, James Addison, also a circuit rider, managed to make a living by restricting his pulpit work to Sundays and teaching during the rest of the week.\textsuperscript{47}

By far the most common additional work was that of farming, since in this way at least part of the necessities of life could be obtained directly. Almost every traveling preacher tried to raise at least a few vegetables for his family. Soon after the Civil War, B. C. Addison, the third brother of that family to labor for the Methodist Church, wrote from Hockley,
"I expect to transfer to this conference and if I take work I will be able to attend to a little farm, where I can make enough for my family, and perhaps something to spare."48

Sometimes, however, the circuit rider could not make ends meet, no matter how much part-time work he attempted. In this case, as he went farther and farther into debt to the local merchants who gave him credit for the things he had to have, the itinerant minister was forced to quit regular preaching and turn to other employment. Not uncommonly a preacher who had done this remained unhappy until he reached the day that he could return to the job that he enjoyed most. Perhaps the case of our friend, Oscar M. Addison, will serve as a good example of this sort of problem. In November, 1867, he requested Bishop McIntyre to grant him location, and soon afterwards he settled down with his family to begin the life of a farmer.49 The next month his brother wrote him:

"...This is the first intimation I have had of your having located. Do you think you will be as happy as before? The fear of it has kept me from locating, though perhaps I would have done better to have done so, some time since."50

The following year, Addison's close friend, the ever zealous Joel T. Davos, sent him a letter reflecting his views on the problem of location:

"Although it is sometimes necessary to locate, or engage in other secular matters, I am fully persuaded, that the full spirit of the ministry is maintained only at a full sacrifice of everything else to it. We are the great sufferers. [When] The people, the church drives us to secular
pursuits, we lose our power or at least enjoyment in preaching. We are the sufferers—we lose immensely here and more hereafter in stars from our crown of glory.31

Addison finally decided that he could not remain out of the active work to which he had become accustomed. After three years of farming he returned to riding the circuit. Unfortunately, Reverend Addison, burdened by the poverty of a decade spent on circuits with little pay, found it necessary in 1880 to locate again. After trying every way he could think of to keep from going into a second retirement, he wrote the entire story to Davies:

"I have been exercised much of late in regard to continuing on my work—owing mainly to the fact that in the improvement of my home I incurred some debts that are still hanging over me, and that my circuit could not assist me in my embarrassment. On meeting my P. E. [Presiding Elder] I plainly told him that in view of my financial condition I feared I would be compelled to give up my work. I laid the matter before the conference (they had assessed my salary at $400) and told them I owed money that must be paid—-that if my salary was paid it would enable me to do so, but that from appearances I did not see how they could do it, that in the absence of their ability to do so, I proposed to give up the work. If any proposition had been made to arrange for the payment of the small salary allowed me, I should have concluded that Providence indicated by that act that I should remain, but as no one said anything to encourage me in the belief that I would be paid, I felt the way plainly opened for my return home. So, I am here, to devote myself to business connected with my farm and to take care of my wife and children, and preach. The latter, though named last, is not the least of the duties enumerated. I love to preach and expect to do a great deal of it. I am not one of the many who seem to think a man cannot preach acceptably, or profitably unless he works in the field presented by the conference."32
So we see that from a financial point of view the life of the circuit rider was a far from happy one. Yet, most of these men and their families were happy in the knowledge that they were doing what they really wanted to do. Our study of the income of the traveling preacher in Texas might well end with a statement by the daughter of one of these men:

"He [J. H. Mills] served in Shelby, Panola, Nacogdoches, Anderson and Trinity Counties, also in Henderson and Cherokee Counties, and never had a salary above $600.00. How he managed was to rent a small farm. We had no parsonage till I was 16 years old. He raised a garden and feed for his horses, and occasionally a wealthy brother or sister would contribute a few yards of gingham or calico, which my mother's clever fingers converted into dresses and shirts. He had a hard time making 'tongue and buckle meet,' but never faltered in trying to do his best to serve the church faithfully and well."

Several of the handicaps which a circuit rider in Texas in the post bellum years had to face have been mentioned. However, there were others, so let us examine them all so that we may form some opinion as to the difficulties which beset these men in their travels.

The primary trouble which most of these people encountered was that of the opposition of the physical needs of the world which we have already discussed in some detail. Of a more immediate nature, however, were the ordinary weather and geographical hazards. The circuit rider making his round must have thought that he was faced at every turn in the road with rain, cold, rivers, hills, gulleys, mud,
and dust. Usually the traveling minister simply went through these obstacles without making any comment. Occasionally a rare pastoral report will contain some mention of the fact that "The larger streams remain swollen, so that to cross them was difficult, and sometimes well-nigh impossible." Reverend Smith in discussing these problems showed the author a small handbook which had obviously been soaked with water at some time in the distant past. The cover of the book was warped and swollen and there were water stains on nearly all the pages. This former circuit rider commented that the book had gotten wet when he was forced to swim his horse across a swollen stream and the water leaked into the saddle bags.

It must have been even more galling to these men to have to contend with artificial hazards which they certainly must have considered unnecessary. Often the roads were worse than no roads at all since they only formed dust in the dry seasons and collected mud in wet weather. The possibility of good roads to travel was probably something that they never expected to encounter this side of heaven. The circuit rider who returned to his labors after the Civil War must have been especially annoyed to find a number of fenced fields where there had previously been large farms without man-made barriers. The dissatisfaction was probably short lived, however, since as noted previously, these small farms were the life blood of the circuit rider.
As indicated earlier, the size of the circuit was usually a problem only in the less settled areas of West and North Texas; in East Texas the itinerant minister could usually expect to have stations no more than twenty miles apart. In 1837, W. L. Harris, on the Mobeetie Mission in Northwest Texas, preached over an area of nearly six thousand square miles. To make his round, he went 650 miles in a two-wheeled cart and more than once he traveled 150 miles to preach to a single family. Thomas Duncan, who supplied the Dickens Mission, had in his charge nearly a dozen counties, including an area of ten thousand square miles. The mission report of 1877 records instances of one minister having as many as twenty stops on his round. In many cases these circuits were indefinite in size, with the minister simply going where he could find people. There were no large towns in the Panhandle and most of the people in that district lived in sod houses or dugouts. Needless to say, the circuit rider could expect no better and felt himself fortunate if he could come by a reasonably well constructed dugout.

As a general rule, the Indian danger was confined to stealing, and that before 1874 when the Indians were brought under control. Here again, the principal trouble came in the less populated regions. The pastoral report made by G. W. Graves of the Lempasas Circuit in 1869 contains the
The depredations of the Indians have so increased, that on some occasions, it has been quite dangerous to travel, and impossible to hold profitable religious meetings. From this cause, however, I have not, as yet, missed an appointment.

T. F. Sessions has noted that a Winchester rifle was a regular part of the circuit rider's equipment in West Texas. He records that on one occasion in 1863, Reverend William Monk's horse was stolen by the Indians, whereupon this traveling preacher put his rifle and saddle bags on his shoulder and walked twenty miles to his next appointment, a camp meeting.

It is interesting to note that although Indian raids on other settlers were not uncommon during the post bellum years, the itinerant ministers seem to have been singularly fortunate in preserving their lives from this menace. Undoubtedly this was partly due to the caution exercised by these men, for they never went far from home in the Indian country unless they were well armed. They most certainly did not rely on spiritual means as their only basis for protection.

Another cross borne by the circuit rider was particularly unjust. Being under the ever present eyes of the population, he knew that his every word and action was being watched by some few overly critical members of his charge. Apparently some of these people must have spent most of their waking moments in an effort to find something
uncomplimentary to say about their ministers. Phelan records a case in which a scandal resulted from two preachers attending a circus. Evidently the "watchdogs of the community" felt that the circuit rider should not have engaged in any form of pleasure. In the early years of the present century, a well known minister was severely censured for playing dominoes with his wife. The high regard in which most members of the circuit rider's congregations held their minister would indicate that these cases were fortunately rare. Certainly, there were circuit riders who did not live up to the standards of their calling. However, though few records of these men have come down to the present day, we find that in most of these cases in which a minister was charged with violation of his code, the facts proved that he was not guilty.

Although there have been notable exceptions since the days of Wesley himself, the traveling preacher was usually a fairly strong man physically. Since, as we have seen, this was not a calling that could be followed by a person who was not at the peak of physical life, the itinerant was commonly a relatively young man. Nearly half of the Methodist circuit riders in the United States who died before 1847 were under thirty years of age. Although a great number of these deaths must have been the result of diseases which could have been controlled by the last half of the nineteenth century, many of them were caused by the rigors
of the work. Certainly, the life expectancy of a circuit rider in Texas during this later period was far greater than thirty years, but it is doubtful that the difficulties of going into the less settled areas of this state were much less than those encountered by Francis Asbury in New England fifty years earlier. This was certainly not an occupation that was conducive to a long life.

It is safe to state that the itinerant preacher in Texas was, with some minor exceptions, a hard-working, underpaid, self-sacrificing member of post bellum society, who did not complain in spite of his hardships. It might be appropriate to close this section of our study with two quotations which show the attitude of the circuit riders to their work. The first is from a letter written by our ever zealous friend, Joel T. Daves, in 1868:

"I have never been so poor in my life as I have this year. I have money due me, plenty to make me comfortable one year and pay off my little debts but can't get it. I have just barely lived and that's all. At one time I had to neglect my correspondence [sic] for want of stamps. ... [But] A preacher gets pretty good pay after all here and hereafter if faithful to the end."64

Homer S. Thrall, writing in 1889, recalled a half century of itinerant life by feeling that his life was never especially hard:

"Why should a preacher appeal for sympathy when professional men, mechanics, stockmen, merchants, and even sewing-machine agents endure the same hardships in prosecuting their worldly avocations?"65

It is now appropriate to examine in some detail a
phase of the circuit rider's work to which both he and the members of his charge looked forward with great anticipation—the camp meeting.
CHAPTER III
THE CAMP MEETING

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

Psalms 85:6

In the years following the Civil War, large numbers of Texans turned to some form of emotional religious experience as a means of escape from the harsh realities of Reconstruction. In the semi-settled rural areas, the regions which the circuit rider most ably served, this release was commonly found through the medium of the camp meeting. The number and intensity of these gatherings increased until they reached a level of popularity not equaled in this country since the days of the "Great Awakening." Although the camp meeting was a common sight in Texas well into the present century, the peak of this mode of worship was reached around the last decade of the nineteenth century. Indeed, it was in the '90's that J. T. Griswold wrote from North Texas that "Revival fires burned from one side of that circuit to the other...."1

Thus, during the period that we are considering, the camp meeting became such an integral part of the circuit rider's routine that it merits our more detailed study.

Although professional revivalists conducted camp meetings throughout the year, the gatherings that were under the supervision of itinerant ministers were usually annual affairs. As a general rule, they took place in August, since
that was a slack period for most farmers. By that time of year the crops had been "laid by," or planted, but it was still too early to begin harvesting corn and cotton, the principal products raised in the center of the camp meeting country in East Texas. When the circuit was relatively small, and the circuit rider was thus near by most of the time, the traveling preacher often supervised the arrangements for the meetings. In many cases, however, the absence of the circuit rider necessitated the preparation of the physical site of the gathering by lay members of the church. Even under these conditions, the obtaining of speakers remained the concern of the itinerant minister.

In general, the setting for the camp meeting had changed but little since the time, nearly a hundred years before, when Francis Asbury wrote in his journal,

"I viewed the ground at Philip's Manor, [New York] selected for our camp-meeting. ...I went to the camp-ground, and looked on at the people, busy clearing the ground, fixing the seats, and building the stand."

The busy farmers of the area where the meeting was to be held began to prepare the ground several days in advance. In many cases this work was delegated to some of the boys of the community. At any rate, a large space was cleared of bushes and high grass. Next the ground was covered, first with oat stalks, but in later years with saw dust, which one of the boys had obtained from the nearest saw mill.
Finally, benches were put in place in rows going back from the platform and pulpit which had been constructed at one end of the assembly area. 4

In most cases the same camp grounds were used year after year and the facilities were of a semi-permanent type of construction, often an arbor which was repaired and used as long as this type of religious service continued. Griswold described an arbor which had been hurriedly built by pitching hay upon a network of barbed wire on the top of mesquite poles which had been driven into the ground. 5 Often the shelter, though still called an arbor, was actually a huge shed-like structure open on all sides. Coal oil lamps, placed on shelves which were built out from the supporting posts, provided the light for night meetings. Music was supplied by a pump organ which was brought from the nearby church building. 6

By the time these preparations had been completed, the congregation had begun to drift in. Of course, many people lived close enough to the site to commute between the meeting and their home every day. However, a second, and perhaps even larger group, lived so far away that it was necessary for them to actually camp at the meeting. Sometimes these people would pitch tents; but, since each family used the same site from one year to the next, they often built a crude shack, or shed, to use as a dwelling during the course of the meeting. Since the weather was
warm, the main purpose of such a structure was simply to keep out rain. These campers usually brought the necessary furniture, especially beds, with them and took it back home after the close of the meeting.  

The gatherings were of such significance to the people that entire families would often come from some distance away and stay for the entire series of meetings. In such cases, a neighbor was called upon to care for the stock in the absence of the family, or one member might stay at home, or ride back on horseback each day to make sure that everything was all right on the farm. 

In the post bellum period, camp meetings usually lasted eight days, beginning and ending on a Sunday. The number of services a day varied from one meeting to another. Phelan records a gathering at the Waco Holiness Camp Ground in 1894 where seven devotions were held each day. Another account, speaking of an earlier time, refers to four sermons daily, with the hours between filled with "prayer, exhortation and testimony." Both narratives are probably correct since one records only the number of actual sermons, while the other probably refers to all gatherings held during the course of a normal day. A circuit rider's daughter who used to attend the camp meetings in East Texas recalls that the day started with a pre-dawn prayer meeting, actually two meetings, one for the men, the other for the women. Here, the leaders were chosen from the congregation. Later in
the morning there was a sermon, followed by another in the afternoon, and a third at night. All of these discourses were by the local circuit rider, assisted by the presiding elder and one or more guest preachers.  

The sermons were usually simple, but powerful. Much emphasis was placed on personal religion based on faith and salvation. This point may be exemplified by the texts of four sermons delivered by O. A. Fisher at a camp meeting in October, 1872:

Acts 2:1 "...they were all with one accord in one place."
Matthew 28:18 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
Hosea 4:17 "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."
I Corinthians 2:9 "...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

The first and third are concerned with the duty of the individual and what happens to him when he neglects that duty, while the second and fourth deal with the power of Christ and the gift of this power to those who are saved. The first three might be thought of as a stern warning, while the last is a promise of reward. In all four the principal concern is the individual.

The camp meeting was primarily an emotional experience. We can readily imagine that a tremendous effect would be produced by the sight of a powerful preacher...
proclaiming a "hell-fire and damnation" sermon by the light of flickering coal oil lamps. The response was often quite positive and immediate. An exceptionally emotional person might react by loosing consciousness, shouting, or "just getting happy." In some cases, as Henderson points out, this reaction was looked upon as the judgment of God toward sinners, in others as a visitation of the Holy Spirit.

This type of reaction was not universal, nor was it as common as in the days of the "Great Awakening." Nevertheless, numerous accounts are extant of emotional responses to the preacher's message. For example, Mrs. O. M. Addison wrote to her husband from the camp-ground at Mulberry Canyon that,

"We had a glorious meeting last night, we had grove meetings and such a good time that penitents came crying and pleading for mercy, they were met on the way by their friends, who stopped them and began praying for them, until we couldn't have preaching, the preacher just called penitents, and we met to work in the altar and such a time I haven't seen or heard for a long time, they made so much noise praying and shouting, we could hardly sing, just look and listen and praise God for salvation. Well 6 souls were converted and 6 joined the church...." Addison, himself, described a specific reaction to his preaching in a letter to his friend, Joel T. Daves, written in 1880:

"Our camp meeting is just over. We staid on the ground 9 days and had about 40 conversions. It was a most gracious time, the good results of which are not yet all visible. Some 45 united with the church. ...After preaching one night I walked to my tent for a drink of water, while returning to the stand I met a brother hastily
approaching me in considerable excitement. Said he 'There is trouble down there. ...Bro. Jack Morgan says he met you in the road the other day, and spoke to you, and you would not speak to him. He then made a vow that he would never hear you preach. Tonight, although almost shouting happy, when he saw you were going to preach, he undertook to run but the Lord threw him and he has been in a dreadful condition ever since.' This explained that the loud groaning I heard in the rear of the pulpit while preaching was from my Baptist bro. Jack Morgan, instead as I had supposed, of some other sinner, struggling for deliverance. ...I nearly know the man by sight and never intentionally mistreated him. ...he became displeased at a point I made in a previous sermon to the effect that a Christian who did not learn to read could not meet his obligation to learn the will of God by reading for himself the Bible. His vanity and ignorance got the better of him, but he gave up. As he wallowed on the ground he made confession. His agony, I was told, was painful to witness. After a long struggle he left the ground a witness told me 'still with the jerks.'

As might be expected, the ever emotional Davos replied to Addison's letter with an equally moving account of a camp meeting conversion:

"The case you gave me of your Baptist brother is a very striking one. I was much interested in it. The details sound very much like the days of Methodism's power.

Recently I was called to Marshall to help in a meeting. Preached every night for a week to large houses. ...There were some 16 or 18 conversions. I was in the altar...laboring with a sweet woman, married, who had come forward with streaming eyes to the altar at my invitation. I had about given up for the time...just then I saw a wonderful change in her face, [I] said 'Why you are better?' Yes said she, but I want such a blessing as there can be no room for doubt. Said I, you have it now if you will only confess it. Praise God for what you have. The brightness increased. Yes said she
'I have—I am blessed!' 'But,' looking at me, eyes filled with wonder said she, 'I wanted to shout!'
I replied, I was 3 weeks seeking religion because I did not want to shout."

Sometimes, these manifestations of "religion" were not without their humorous aspects. This is indicated by an account in Gravis' book, Twenty-Five Years on the Outside Row, which shows also that some of the emotional reactions were not entirely genuine.

"An amusing incident occurred under the arbor at one of our camp-meetings. The arbor stood where the church now stands in the town of Comanche. A Brother Kiser, who was in the habit of going into unconsciousness--spiritual state-- and for hours would lie in the straw, while his wife would sit with his head in her lap; and the brethren would gather around him and sing. On one occasion Brother Kiser was down in the straw, on his back, to all appearance unconscious, drinking in the bright visions of immortality, when one of the sisters standing on a bench, raised her lamp so high that the blaze caught the dry leaves and set the arbor on fire. The audience rushed from under much excited. Brother Kiser, where was he? Well, reader, he was the first one out. The fire had raised him to newness of life, for he was afraid of fire."18

From these accounts, it seems likely that many camp meetings had at least a few people who reacted in a somewhat violent manner to the message they received, although the extreme cases of the "jerks!" which were a part of most descriptions of earlier gatherings, were usually absent in this period.

The significance of these meetings may be considered from three viewpoints, as a community effort, as an emotional release, and as a means of genuine salvation.

As a community effort, these meetings allowed the
people a means of relaxation, something of which they had very little in the hard days following the Civil War. In some ways the camp meetings might be compared to a county fair, for they were, indeed, the high point in entertainment for these farmers who lived far from any large town. Here was a chance, probably the only chance in many cases, to see old friends and relatives and discuss the various sorrows and joys that the year had brought. Here was excitement, something out of the ordinary, in a life which quickly developed into a set pattern.

Even more important than the change that the camp meeting brought was the general spirit of goodwill that pervaded these occasions. Homer S. Thrall recalled that these were cooperative efforts where "liberal laymen" killed a beef a day and furnished any amount of corn meal and often the last flour available was used to make the sacramental bread. He sums up this attitude by saying that "...everything was dispensed with a spirit of boundless hospitality." This, then, was a means by which energies which would ordinarily be used in many different and perhaps opposing ways were brought together in constructive efforts.

As we have already noted, the camp meeting was to some people a means of positive emotional expression. But, as Curti notes, it was to many people, who did not express themselves in such an active way, a deliverance, for they
were "Hankering for emotional release, lonely in soul and starved for companionship..."20 These gatherings were a means for taking the minds of the congregation off their own troubles for a brief period and channeling in a harmless direction some of the hatred built up by Reconstruction and war. In this way, tensions were relaxed and the final result was often a calmer populace.

Unfortunately, the emotional experience of the camp meeting had the bad after effect of being largely based on feeling rather than thought. Because of this, the result in many cases was probably a terrific letdown when the enthusiasm of the moment had worn off. This was one of the reasons that these meetings tended to be a focal point for criticism from other religious bodies and, in later years, from those sophisticated people who made no effort to understand them.

There was far more to the camp meeting than is indicated by the rather spectacular emotional characteristics which were only on the surface. Many people who "got religion" in this manner kept it all their lives. Many of the congregations who attended these gatherings were uneducated and never could have understood an intellectual approach to religion. These people needed this sort of shock to obtain a fullness of meaning which their belief could not have developed in any other way. In this respect, the camp meeting was the ancestor of some of the more valuable revival meetings of the
present day. Curti sums up this contribution when he says that "Revivals brought genuine religious inspiration to countless thousands and ... helped check religious indifference and skepticism."

It is, of course, true that some of the people who went to the meetings did not retain anything of value that they may have received from this type of religion. These were the people who created a bad name for the camp meeting in later days by recalling its less desirable aspects but not the elements of true value which were present in the gatherings. Close study shows that, in spite of these people, the camp meeting served a very definite and respected role in the development of American culture.
CHAPTER IV

THE MESSAGE OF THE CIRCUIT RIDER

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 10:7

Although a partial picture of the circuit rider may be obtained by studying the duties and habits of the itinerant preachers, the representation is not complete without an examination of what these men had to say and the basis of their message to Texans of the last century. The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, laid the foundation for the primary points of emphasis which were made by the circuit riders in America from the days of Francis Asbury to the post bellum period. Wesley taught the value of a "vital, practical religion" based upon itinerant ministers who preached the importance of the individual.\(^1\) In sermon after sermon, the circuit rider pounded home the message that personal salvation is achieved by faith in Christ and good works. This was a message that fairly vibrated with life and which the circuit rider expressed in what Phelan calls the "pulpit recipe" of the post bellum period:

"Begin low, go slow.
When most oppressed, be self-possessed.
Rise higher, catch fire.
Wax warm, close out in a storm."\(^2\)

In this chapter, we shall examine some of the arguments which the circuit rider used in presenting what he had to say to the congregations of Texas.
Few of the sermons of the itinerant preachers are preserved today in their original form. The author was especially fortunate in being allowed to examine the manuscript of a sermon delivered in the post bellum period by Oreneth A. Fisher. In this particular case, the circuit rider took as his text Matthew 19:27, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?"

Reverend Fisher explained this passage by saying that good and evil are in opposition. If, as the scripture says, we leave everything else for Christ, we have chosen the good, rather than the evil. Not only this, we have rejected material pleasures for those of the spirit. By this action, then, we shall receive certain benefits, which this circuit rider listed as follows:

1. "We shall have a Savior."
2. "We have now solid pleasure."
3. "We may look away to the joys of heaven."

This sermon is simply a direction for obtaining salvation both in this life and in the life to come. In this type of message, the circuit rider of post bellum Texas was trying to show a way in which the individual could take his mind off the troubles that plagued him in this world.

The sermon was the primary means by which the itinerant preacher delivered what he had to say to the people of post bellum Texas. There was, however, another way, employed with great success by the circuit rider, of getting a message across to a relatively uneducated congregation. This was the
hymn or what might be considered in some cases the "White Spiritual." Since these hymns were not composed by circuit riders, they may be considered a secondary means of presenting a religious thought. As such, they are not so important, for the purposes of this work, as the sermons of the traveling ministers. Nevertheless, they certainly should not be ignored, for they did embody the message of the circuit rider.

As Henderson notes, the hymns sung in the semi-developed areas of Texas were not overburdened with theology, but contained enough religious ideas and appeal to cause men to seek salvation. Like the sermons of the itinerant ministers, the hymns emphasized a personal and individual love of God for man. In many cases, they were designed to keep people from becoming discouraged by giving them assurance of their ultimate salvation. As an example of this type of message, Henderson quotes:

"In hope of that immortal crown
I now the cross sustain;
And gladly wander up and down
And smile at trial and pain."7

One of those especially hardy circuit riders, who took his message to the people of North Texas, James T. Hosmer, recalled an evening in the eighties when he sang with the cowboys "There's room enough in paradise for all to have a home in glory."8 In the same vein, Hosmer related that he once led a song in a very rough town meeting, held in a
school house in North Texas. The hymn was one of those most favored by the circuit riders, "Amazing Grace:"9

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun."10

Reverend Charles Smith was kind enough to allow the author to examine one of the small hymn books which the circuit riders carried in their saddle bags.11 It contained no music, only words, for in those days it was customary for the traveling preacher to "line" the hymns to his audience, that is, he would read or sing a line of the hymn, the people would sing it, and then he would read another line.12 Several rather interesting facts were obtained by studying the old book. An analysis of the sixty-two songs based on scripture shows that, as would be expected, the majority (thirty-four) were from the Psalms. It is rather surprising, however, to find that the next highest number was a tie of six each from Revelations and Isaiah.13 All of these hymns were from verses of scripture which expressed the redemptive power of Christ and the joy and blessedness which awaits the faithful. In fact, nearly all of the Biblical based hymns either express thanks, or indicate the glory of God. These songs, then, supported the spoken message of the circuit rider, the hope of individual salvation.
Several page corners in the hymnal, belonging to the former circuit rider, were turned down. The hymns on each of those pages are those which are still most sung today. Indeed, almost all of the more popular modern hymns were in *The New Hymn-Book*, published in 1886. The songs included in this book would indicate that those by Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts were very widely used. It certainly seems likely that tastes in hymns have changed but little in the last half century. At least, those most enjoyed by Reverend Smith are still popular.

The desire for immediate salvation, evidenced in the sermons and hymns of the period, led to the "Holiness Movement," the most important doctrinal controversy in which the circuit riders played a major role during the years following the Civil War. Sometimes this same controversy was called the movement of "Second Blessing" or "Entire Sanctification." The argument arose over the question of whether or not man could achieve perfection in this life. The Biblical basis was Philippians 3:12, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect," and the fifteenth verse of the same chapter, "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded." Even more important than these passages was John Wesley's sermon, "Christian Perfection," which was based upon them. The founder of Methodism explained that scripture shows that Christians can attain perfection in some things, but not
in others, and can, therefore, be both perfect and not perfect at the same time.¹⁸ Many circuit riders could not accept this compromise; and insisted in rejecting either one or the other point of view.

Those ministers who could not accept the doctrine of entire sanctification were undoubtedly comforted by the section of Wesley's sermon in which he stated that there cannot be absolute perfection on earth because every man has need to "grow in grace."¹⁹ This was apparently the basis for the views taken by Daves on the subject. In 1884 he wrote his fellow circuit rider, Oscar M. Addison,

"See you are the Secretary of your Conf. Holiness Association. ...I am free to say that I would not have joined your association if I had been a member of your conf. I don't think that is the way to get or practice Christian perfection. I think holiness of heart is something to be professed, enjoyed but I question the profession before the world thereof. ...When there is room for growth there can't be perfection in its best sense. I am persuaded in this sense there will be no perfection in heaven because there will be growth. Here is when the trouble comes in."²⁰

It is not surprising to find that the adherents of the doctrine of entire sanctification based their argument on Wesley's sermon, just as the opponents placed their trust in the same message. Wesley states that "...since the gospel was given, 'he that is born of God sinneth not.'"²¹ On this basis, the father of Methodism says that a true Christian is "so far perfect" that he does not commit sin, "is free from evil or sinful thoughts," and "is free from
A person advocating either side of the so-called "Holiness" question could base his argument on the words of Wesley. Today, we are inclined to pass off such a problem as nothing more than a splitting of hairs. Nevertheless, this issue was the source of controversy and division for about thirty years, beginning around 1876.23

In an orderly fashion, some of the people who advocated the second blessing doctrine organized the Northwest Texas Holiness Association to combat the rise of fanaticism.24 One of the leaders, B. F. Gassoway, stated that they wanted to "shield the movement from fanatics and 'Come-outers' ... and convince our brethren that we proposed no movement that was not sane and conservative."25 In 1889, prestige was added to the advocates of entire sanctification when Bishop Key endorsed it under the name of "Second Blessing."26

Oraceneth Fisher, one of the most famous circuit riders of the period, explained, in a letter written to Oscar H. Addison in 1874, why he favored the perfection doctrine:

"My experience is that only when the doctrine has been held in good faith by us, as a people, has the work of God prospered regularly among us. Without it our revivals are fitful, shallow, and short lived. The blessing of entire sanctification forms a pentecostal era in the life of every one who receives it. From that hour they have more power with God and with men. Go ahead my brother, both in the pursuit of it, and in preaching it; and have unbounded faith in God, and your success is certain."27
It seems quite probable that, as Fisher indicated, the controversy created excitement and thus made a living, everyday force out of an old belief that had caused little trouble before this time. Like the camp meeting, this was the sort of thing that focused the attention of the people on the church, and, more especially, on the circuit rider who was proclaiming the doctrine. In this sense, the dispute over entire sanctification had a very vital appeal to both educated and uneducated people. It was of interest from an emotional viewpoint to those who lacked scholarly training. This must have included the majority of the people who became fanatical on the subject, and, as we shall note later, created a bad name for the movement. Because of its theological basis, the doctrine also had an interest for even the most highly trained mind. The controversy over the possibility of Christian perfection was of value, then, in that it acted as a focal point for a renewed interest in religion.

It seems rather doubtful that the new emphasis which the holiness movement placed upon the circuit rider and his work overbalanced the disrupting effects that it produced. Fisher must have realized this when he wrote Oscar M. Addison that,

"A difference of opinion among Methodist preachers on the great subject of sanctification is unfortunate. It must have, so far as it is made public, a paralysing effect upon the religious life of the church."
Joel T. Daves was glad to allow other circuit riders their own opinions, but, as indicated in a letter written to Addison in 1884, he abhorred the growing public controversy on the subject:

"If your mark is of the Lord go on & do it. Don't answer questions and get up a controversy on the subject."^29

According to Duren, the movement often enlisted people who were of the extreme type and, as a result of this, it tended to smirch the evangelistic calling.^30 Those who were opposed to it said that entire sanctification, in its militant form, disrupted normal church procedure and allowed incompetents to preach.^31 If this accusation may be considered as being entirely accurate, the movement created a danger that a radical element might destroy the good work that had been done by the circuit rider.

Even more dangerous than unorthodox statements and methods of preaching was the animosity which was created among members of the same religious body. A new body, the Church of the Nazarenes, was formed in 1919 out of the ill will that arose over this question, but an even more basic schism was the splitting of individual circuits.^32 For example, a letter written to Oscar M. Addison in 1885, cites a case where two of the three preaching places in a circuit, together with the parsonage, were taken from a circuit rider who preached entire sanctification.^33 This was probably an extreme case, but the Church realized the
danger that such strife was bringing to the itinerant system of Texas, with the result that the East Texas Conference passed a resolution in 1894 which stated the fear that had arisen among the members of the group because of "alienation between brethren." The resolution concluded by reaffirming the doctrine of entire sanctification, but at the same time saying that membership in holiness associations was unnecessary. In the same year the Northwest Texas Conference outlawed the second blessing doctrine, with the result that the Northwest Texas Holiness Association was dissolved.

The adverse effects of the controversy should not be overly emphasized. Most of the danger was probably of a long range, though very real, nature. Certainly, it should not be implied that all circuit riders were caught in the net of argumentation. As we have seen, both Joel T. Daves and Orsoneth Fisher were very anxious that the external strife which accompanied the controversy be kept at a minimum. Charles F. Smith, the former circuit rider, gave his reactions to the holiness movement by observing that many people are content to do nothing but some few want to do more than can be done. Reverend Smith summed up his general opposition to such radical movements and doctrines by quoting, with approval, a reply to a question of discipline which he put to Bishop J. C. Keenor, "Study the Discipline and go by it." It seems likely that many circuit riders took this same view and left the question of entire sanctification, together
with all of its implications, strictly alone.

The importance of the second blessing doctrine in the study of the message of the circuit rider lies in the fact that this frontier theology was a dramatic example of the normal type of sermon that these traveling preachers delivered. This doctrine was vitally concerned with the individual and his immediate salvation. It was something that could be debated, something that could be brought home in terms that were understandable to all.

The sermons and the hymns of the circuit rider were usually like his life, simple and direct. The traveling preacher taught a personal religion, based on the individual, and illustrated by doctrine. Usually, it was not designed or intended to fill an intellectual need, but an emotional void. It is true that in some instances the message which the itinerant minister brought to the people of Texas was founded on a thoughtful and somewhat difficult theological basis. In these cases, however, the circuit rider presented the message in such a way that its appeal was not limited to those few members of his congregation who could understand the original treatise on which it was based. These ministers were concerned primarily with bringing a message of hope and salvation to a people who lived by hard work and who were fighting the aftereffects of a war which destroyed the way of life on which their philosophy had depended for generations. If the circuit rider lessened the
troubles of his people, and for a time, even, led them to
something that was ultimately good, then his message was of
a value which went far beyond the limits of the ideas which
it embodied.
CHAPTER V

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CIRCUIT RIDER

"The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God."

Isaiah 40:3

In the previous chapters, we have examined the circuit rider in post bellum Texas from several different viewpoints: the type of man that he was, the kind of life he led, what he was trying to do, what he had to say. While we found that the itinerant preacher was often far from perfect, nevertheless, he seemed to be a person who filled a basic need of society. Certainly, the circuit rider exerted an influence on the people with whom he came in contact. The question is what was the magnitude of that influence, and was it good or bad. Here, we shall attempt to find an answer to these questions.

The importance of the traveling minister may be considered in two very different categories: the immediate effect during the years in which he lived and worked, and the influence on society after the turn of the century. The primary impact of the circuit rider has already been indicated to some extent. Serving as an emotional release, he "invested the most prosaic life with a halo of romance."1 Here was something good on which a people starved by war and destruction could place their trust. Here was one of the few institutions which had not been changed by the years of struggle and defeat. As they listened to the
message of the circuit rider, his congregations could lose their own troubles as they were taught to place their faith in an ultimate good that transcended the temporary evils of the physical world. Texans who had almost become accustomed to destructive influences could at last work together in the constructive projects of the itinerant preacher.

Curiously enough, the greatest weakness of the circuit rider lay in his greatest strength, for certainly the essential appeal of the traveling ministers lay in their emotional approach to religion. Most of the people who heard these men were not trained to appreciate a more intellectual religious experience and it is doubtful if sermons based on principles of more advanced theological philosophy would have been as valuable to the congregations for whom they were intended. Nevertheless, it is possible that a more enduring message, more ably constructed to withstand the attacks of science and criticism, might have resulted if all of the circuit riders had been as well trained as the best of them.

Certainly, the circuit rider exerted a great influence on the communities which he served. In some cases, as Henderson suggests, Texas was still the frontier in its most romantic and boisterous sense. In these places the itinerant preacher often helped make whole regions law abiding and safe for large settlement. Although he was certainly not the only influence that worked to develop settled communities, the traveling minister was usually
respected as a symbol as well as a man. In many cases the wildest towns in Texas would quiet down to hear the message that the circuit rider brought. Often these preachers were among the first people to enter undeveloped areas and, in these cases, they helped prevent a lawless society from arising. Sometimes, the first crude buildings were used as churches. In these places, the circuit rider of the Methodist Church was usually the only preacher in the entire region and, since his creed was in general agreement with most other Protestant doctrines, all of the people of the community became accustomed to consulting him. Thus, his immediate influence was felt far beyond the doors of his own church.

In a purely material sense, the efforts of the itinerant ministers were a major factor in the increase of Methodism in Texas from a low of 17,385 white church members immediately following the Civil War to 317,495 soon after the turn of the century—truly an amazing development.

However, the most important influence of the circuit rider lay in his role as a pioneer for greater things to come in religion. In the more settled areas of East Texas the prospect for regular local preachers was a relatively immediate hope, while in the newly opened regions of West Texas and the Panhandle this was a long term dream. Throughout all of Texas the story is much the same. The churches of today, both those of the Methodists and other Protestant
groups, would not have developed as they did without the preliminary pioneer work of the circuit rider. These men were perfectly aware of what they were doing. The itinerant preacher knew that the full fruition of his labors was not likely to come during his own life span. Perhaps Homer S. Thrall summed it up when he said:

"The local preachers! God bless them! We find them everywhere performing the office of a Baptist, preparing the way for regular ministers. And they are always on hand to help in protracted and camp meetings. Texas is indebted beyond computation to the efficient labors of the local ministry."

It seems likely, then, that the circuit rider of postbellum Texas was a definite success. It is true that there were individual failures in the ranks of the itinerant ministers, men who should not have attempted that sort of life. Nevertheless, it is safe to generalize by saying that while his lot was often a very hard one and certainly not a career that would be called a great achievement in terms of material well-being, the traveling preacher did accomplish what he set out to do. People were converted; order replaced chaos; security overcame despair; churches grew and flourished. One of the few of these men who lived to see the results of the itinerant system, Peter Gravis, worked even harder than the usual circuit rider, yet at the end of his career he clearly saw what he and his co-workers had done as he pronounced what may be considered a benediction to the life of
the Methodist circuit riders of post bellum Texas:

"The pleasant circuit or station...cost us, who were first, sweat and toil, privations and hardships. The seeds were sown and took deep root, and now...the church of the living God stands..."
APPENDIX I

METHODIST CIRCUITS IN TEXAS, 1879

The map between pages 16 and 17 shows the approximate location of 191 of the 202 circuits of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in Texas in 1879. The names of these circuits were obtained by checking the minutes of all five of the Texas conferences for that year. It is important to remember that the locations on the map are usually those of the largest community in the individual circuit and that the entire territory covered by the circuit rider in each case was a large area around the location for which the circuit was named. The boundaries of the conferences as shown on the map were set by the General Conference of 1874, the last held before 1879. Those borders, as quoted below, are to be found in The Discipline and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Nashville, 1874), 316-319.

"North Texas Conference shall be bounded on the north by Red River; on the east by the western State lines of Arkansas and Louisiana; on the south by a line commencing at the Louisiana State line in Caddo Lake; thence up said lake to the mouth of Little Cypress River; up said river to Taylor's Bridge; thence in a direct line to Fort Crawford; thence in a direct line to Fredericks, on Sabine River; thence following said river to Nacogdoches; thence by a direct line to the southeast corner of Van Zandt county, including the Canton and Garden Valley Circuits; thence along the southern boundaries of Van Zandt and Kaufman counties to Trinity River and West Fork to its source, and by a direct line from that source to Red River."
Texas Conference shall be bounded on the east by Trinity River from the south-east corner of Leon county to the coast; on the south by the Gulf of Mexico to Trespalacios Bay; on the west by the Trespalacios River and the east line of Jackson, Lavaca, Gonzales, Caldwell, and Hays counties; and on the north by the Perdennes River, and a direct line from its mouth to the north-west corner of Travis county, and the south lines of Williamson, Milam, Robertson, and Leon counties to Trinity River.

East Texas Conference shall be bounded on the north by the southern boundary of North Texas Conference above described; on the east by the Louisiana State line from its junction with the North Texas southern boundary aforesaid, in Caddo Lake, to the Gulf of Mexico; on the south and west by the Gulf of Mexico to the East Pass of Galveston Bay, and thence by said bay and the Trinity River to the south-west corner of Kaufman county.

North-west Texas Conference shall be bounded as follows, viz.: Beginning on the Trinity River, at the south-east corner of Leon county, and running thence with the south line of Leon, Robertson, Milam, and Williamson counties to the north-west corner of Travis county; thence due west to the San Antonio and Fort Mason road; thence with said road to Fort Mason; thence due north to the Colorado River; thence up said river with its meanderings to the Big Spring; thence due north to the State line; thence east with State line to Red River; thence down said river with its meanderings to a point due north of and opposite to the head of West Fork of Trinity River; thence south to the head of said fork of Trinity River; thence down said river with its meanderings to the place of beginning.

West Texas Conference shall include all that part of the State of Texas lying west of the Texas and North-west Texas Conferences.
## APPENDIX II

### SALARY OF J. M. HILLS, 1881-1900

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Appointment</th>
<th>Established Salary</th>
<th>Actual Salary</th>
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The above information was obtained by checking the minutes of the East Texas Conference of the Methodist Church for the years indicated.
NOTES

CHAPTER I


4. Ibid., 319.


7. Ibid., 319-320.

8. Ibid., 319.

9. Ibid., 320.

10. Ibid., 320.

11. Ibid., 320.

12. Ibid., 321. The first mission was established in 1837.

13. Ibid., 310. Martin Ruter was born in Massachusetts in 1795. He was licensed to preach in 1800, and was admitted into the New York Conference a year later. Dr. Ruter served churches in New York, Massachusetts, and Canada until he became the first book agent for the Western Division of the Methodist Book Concern. He was president of August College, Kentucky, and Allegheny College, Pennsylvania. He held the latter post at the time of his appointment to Texas. Unfortunately, Dr. Ruter died less than six months after his arrival in this state. See Lewis Howard Grimes, Cloud of Witnesses (Houston, 1951), 165-167. Littleton Fowler was born in Tennessee in 1808. He was admitted to the Kentucky Conference in 1836 but soon transferred to Tennessee. He came to Texas in 1837.
where he served until his death nine years later. Reverend Fowler is buried beneath the present Melbern Chapel. See Grimes, Cloud of Witnesses, 186. Robert Alexander was born in the same region of Tennessee as Littleton Fowler, but eight years later. He became a minister in his native state at the age of nineteen, but soon after transferred to the Mississippi Conference. He came to Texas soon after the state gained independence from Mexico and remained here until his death in 1882. See Grimes, Cloud of Witnesses, 186.

14. Barclay, Early American Methodism, 322.

15. Ibid., 323.


20. Hall, Methodist Yearbook, 216.

21. Ibid., 360.

22. Homer S. Thrall, A Brief History of Methodism in Texas (Nashville, 1894), 144. Hereafter referred to as Thrall, Methodism in Texas.

23. Ibid., 144.

24. Manuscript letter, Oscar M. Addison to General Granger, June 22, 1865. In the Oscar M. Addison Papers, 1865 in the Eugene G. Barker Texas History Center of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas.


27. Farish, Circuit Rider Discounts, 35.


29. Farish, Circuit Rider Discounts, 207.

30. Peter W. Gravis, Twenty-Five Years on the Outside Roy of the Northwest Texas Annual Conference (Corpus Christi, Texas, 1902), 37. Hereafter referred to as Gravis, Twenty-Five Years on the Outside Roy.


32. Ibid., 166.

33. Manuscript letter, Joel T. Daves to Oscar H. Addison, November 4, 1866. In the Oscar H. Addison Papers. Joel T. Daves, a close personal friend of Oscar H. Addison, served churches and circuits in Texas, Louisiana, and Georgia. He founded the Methodist Mission in Mexico City. Reverend Daves retired in 1892 and then published a little pamphlet called "Daily Walks and Talks With God" until his death in 1895. This information was obtained from the Oscar H. Addison Papers and from a manuscript letter from Reverend Wallace Rogers to this writer, September 9, 1952.

34. Ibid., 9.


36. Ibid., 73.


38. Ibid., 133-143.

40. Ibid., 192-193.
41. Farish, Circuit Rider Discount, 65.
42. Auto., 7.
43. Farish, Circuit Rider Discount, 28.
44. Moll, Methodist Yearbook, 465.
45. Ibid., 233. Until 1874, the present North Texas Conference was called the Trinity Conference.
46. This is not to imply that the conference system in Texas has not changed since the turn of the century. There have been changes in conference boundaries and names, but at the present time there are still only five conferences.
47. Homan Phelan, A History of the Expansion of Methodism in Texas (Dallas, 1937), 7. Hereafter referred to as Phelan, Expansion of Methodism. In the reference above Phelan calls 1897 "the most fatal year the ministry had yet suffered."
49. Phelan, Expansion of Methodism, 84-85.
50. Ibid., 87-88.
51. Ibid., 176, 187.
52. Thrall, Methodist in Texas, 144.

CHAPTER II

1. O. A. Fisher was born in Illinois in 1831. He came to Texas at the age of ten with his father, Reverend Orenoth Fisher. His ministerial career was begun in 1856. From that time until his death in 1894 he served many areas in Central and South Texas. See Phelan, Expansion of Methodism, 256.

2. James Joseph Moses Mills was born in Georgia in 1841. He served in the Confederate cavalry during the Civil War. Reverend Mills came to Texas about 1870 and joined
The East Texas Conference where he served until his superannuation in 1914. He died in 1929. See Mary Elizabeth Hills Elyrod, "The Elyrod Family Tree," transcribed manuscript in the possession of this writer.

3. Oscar Murray Addison was born in Maryland in 1830. His family moved to Texas in 1835. He began preaching in 1846 and spent 52 years in the itinerant ministry before his death in 1898. Addison is of special importance to modern historians since he left all of the papers and letters of both his public and private life to posterity. They are now in the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center of the University of Texas. The writing of this thesis would have been impossible without this source. See Phelan, Expansion of Methodism, 432-454, and the Oscar H. Addison Papers.


5. Charles Freeman Smith was born in Mississippi in 1850, and began his ministry in that state. He was sent to Texas in the eighteen. Reverend Smith rode circuits in East Texas for many years before he turned to work in urban churches. At the present time, at ninety-three years of age, he is associate pastor of St. Paul's Methodist Church in Houston, Texas. This information was obtained in a personal interview with Reverend Smith on June 28, 1952.

6. In this instance the prominent people were Jefferson Davis, former President of the Confederate States of America, John Francis lantram Galeborne, newspaper editor, historian, and United States Congressman, and Charles Edward Hooker, Colonel in the Confederate cavalry, Attorney-General of Mississippi, and United States Congressman. This information was obtained in a personal interview with Reverend Charles Smith on June 28, 1952.


11. Ibid., 22.


14. Minutes of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Session of the North Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Stephenville, Texas, 1901), 44-46.


18. Manuscript letter, C. M. Fisher to Mrs. O. A. Fisher, July 15, 1881. In the C. M. Fisher Papers, HSS in the Eugene S. Barker Texas History Center of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

19. Manuscript letter, Oscar M. Addison to Mrs. O. M. Addison, January 8, 1889. In the Oscar M. Addison Papers.

20. Thomason, Lone Star Frencnsh, 45-46.


22. Ibid., 60, 62.

23. Ibid., 53.

24. Ibid., 65.

25. Ibid., 56.

26. Ibid., 53.
33. This information was obtained in a personal interview with Reverend Charles F. Smith on July 12, 1952.

34. Tigert, Disciplining, 60-61.

35. Diary of O. A. Fischer, March 5, 1876. Transcribed diary in the possession of Dr. Robert E. Ledbetter, Austin, Texas.

36. Thrall, Methodism in Texas, 194.

37. Minutes of East Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (1881-1900).

38. Manuscript letter, O. M. Addison to Joel T. Devos, June 2, 1874. In the Oscar M. Addison Papers.


40. Manuscript letter, O. M. Addison to Mrs. O. M. Addison, January 30, 1883. In the Oscar M. Addison Papers.

41. "Pounding" was the practice of each member of the charge bringing the preacher a pound of some sort of produce. A person unacquainted with the term would certainly well wonder why anyone would want to "pound" on the poor minister.

42. Graves, Twenty-Five Years on the Outside, 41.

43. H. A. Graves, "Andrew Jackson Potter, The Fighting Parson," Frontier Times, X (1933), 310. Andrew Jackson Potter was born in Missouri in 1830. He enlisted in the United States army at the age of sixteen, and for several years was attached to a wagon train in Kansas and New Mexico. He came to Texas in 1852 and was converted four years later. In 1862, Potter was licensed
to preach in the Methodist Protestant Church. Reverend
Potter served as a chaplain in the Confederate army.
After the war, he became associated with the M. E. Church,
South and was sent to the West Texas Conference. He
remained on the frontier for the rest of his life. Potter
became famous as a preacher who could fight if necessary.
He died while preaching a sermon on the Lockhart Circuit
in 1899. See Phelan, *Expansion of Methodism*, 127-130,
404.

44. This information was obtained in a personal interview
with Reverend Charles F. Smith on July 12, 1952.


47. Manuscript letter, James Addison to C. H. Addison,
October 16, 1862. In the Oscar H. Addison Papers.

48. Manuscript letter, B. G. Addison to C. H. Addison,
April 19, 1867. In the Oscar H. Addison Papers.

49. Holland Simmons McTyre was born in South Carolina in
1824. He entered the ministry at the age of twenty-
one, and was ordained a bishop in 1866. Bishop McTyre
died in 1889 and is buried at Nashville, Tennessee. See

50. Manuscript letter, B. G. Addison to C. H. Addison,
December 23, 1867. In the Oscar H. Addison Papers.

51. Manuscript letter, Joel T. Daves to C. H. Addison,
July 15, 1868. In the Oscar H. Addison Papers.

52. Manuscript letter, C. H. Addison to J. T. Daves,
January 13, 1869. In the Oscar H. Addison Papers.

53. Mary Elizabeth Hills Elrod, "The Hills-Elrod Family Tree."

54. *Minutes of the Lamarass District Meeting of the Methodist
Bishops College*, South, N. W. Texas Conference (Galvas-
ton, 1869), 3-4.

55. This information was obtained in a personal interview
with Reverend Charles F. Smith on July 12, 1952.


CHAPTER III

1. Phelan, Expansion of Methodism, 357.

2. This information was obtained in a personal interview with the author's father, Coy W. Mills, December 21, 1952.


4. This information was obtained in a personal interview with the author's grandmother, Mrs. Sallie Elrod Hills, December 21, 1952.


6. This information was obtained in a personal interview with Coy W. Mills, December 21, 1952.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.


11. This information was obtained in a personal interview with Mrs. Sallie Elrod Hills, December 21, 1952. She was the "circuit rider's daughter."

13. This information was obtained in a personal interview with Mrs. Sallie Elrod Hills, December 21, 1952.


15. Manuscript letter, Mrs. C. M. Addison to O. M. Addison, August 22, 1887. In the Oscar M. Addison Papers.


18. Gravis, Twenty-Five Years on the Outside Row, 37.

19. Thrall, Methodism in Texas, 98.


21. Ibid., 201.

CHAPTER IV

1. Barclay, Early American Methodism, xvi.


3. Manuscript sermon in the possession of Dr. Robert E. Ledbetter, Austin, Texas.


6. Ibid., 50-51.

7. Ibid., 28.


9. Ibid., 148. The popularity of this particular hymn is indicated by the fact that several years ago when Parthenon Records, acting under the guidance of the Methodist Church, recorded several "Hymns of the Circuit Riders," "Amazing Grace" was one of those chosen.
10. These are the first and last verses of the hymn. See Clint Bonner, *A Hymn is Born* (Chicago, 1952), 19.


12. This information was obtained in a personal interview with Reverend Charles F. Smith on July 12, 1952.

13. These are followed by two each from Exodus, Hebrews, and Ephesians, and one each from Judges, Ecclesiastes, Ezekiel, Numbers, Proverbs, Mark, Luke, Acts, Peter, and Galatians.

14. *The New Hymn-Book*, 25, 29-30, 83, 228, 232. The pages were turned down at the following hymns, all well known:
   "Rock of Ages"
   "Christ, the Lord, is Risen Today"
   "Jesus, Lover of my Soul"
   "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"
   "He Leadeth Me"

15. Ibid., 13-19, 29-30, 88, 99, 134, 144, 11, 19, 23-24, 93, 153-154, 165-166. The hymns by Charles Wesley which were included were:
   "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"
   "Christ, the Lord, is Risen Today"
   "Jesus, Lover of my Soul"
   "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"
   "I Want a Principle Within"
   "A Charge to Keep I Have"

   Those by Isaac Watts which were included were:
   "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne"
   "Joy to the World"
   "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"
   "Alas! and did My Saviour Bleed?"
   "Am I a Soldier of the Cross"
   "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"


17. This sermon is number XL in Wesley, *Works*, VI, 1-19.

18. Ibid., 2.


21. Wesley, Works, VI, 10.

22. Ibid., 15-16.

23. Phelan, Expansion of Methodism, 118.

24. Ibid., 118.

25. Ibid., 119.

26. Ibid., 297. Joseph S. Key was born in Georgia in 1829. He entered the ministry in 1849 and was ordained a bishop in 1886. Three years later he was assigned to the entire state of Texas, the first bishop to call Texas his home. Bishop Key advocated the second blessing doctrine, but was not of the fanatical type and tried to refrain from controversy on the subject. He died in 1920 and is buried at Sherman, Texas. See Phelan, Expansion of Methodism, 297, and Milt, Methodist Yearbook, 100.


28. Ibid.


30. Duren, Trail of the Circuit Rider, 350. Phelan notes that a great number of imitators and evangelists, many of whom were connected with the holiness movement, followed "in the wake" of the tours of Sam Jones, who was a particularly controversial figure at this time. See Phelan, Expansion of Methodism, 371.

31. Phelan, Expansion of Methodism, 120.

32. Duren, Trail of the Circuit Rider, 336.

33. Manuscript letter, M. L. McCuistion to Oscar M. Addison, May 12, 1885. In the Oscar M. Addison Papers.

34. Minutes of the Fiftieth Annual Session of the East Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Marshall, Texas, 1894), 29.


37. This information was obtained in a personal interview with Reverend Charles F. Smith on July 12, 1952.
33. In this connection, it should be noted that the Discipline makes no direct mention of the doctrine of entire sanctification. Therefore, it would seem that Bishop Keener, and Reverend Smith, would imply that the controversy should be let alone. John Christian Keener was born in Baltimore in 1819. He became a minister in 1843 and a bishop in 1870. Bishop Keener retired after the General Conference of 1898. He died in 1906 and is buried in New Orleans. See Duren, Trail of the Circuit Rider, 361, and Hall, Methodist Yearbook, 180.

CHAPTER V

2. Ibid., 55.
4. Thrall, Methodism in Texas, 97.
5. Parish, Circuit Rider Dismounts, 93.
6. Thrall, Methodism in Texas, 162, and Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide (Dallas, 1912), 137.
8. Grevis, Twenty-Five Years on the Outside Row, 40.
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I. Primary Material

A. Manuscripts

1. Oscar M. Addison Papers, MSS in the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas. Splendid source. This is a collection of all the private letters of a well-known circuit rider and is a gold mine for the student.

2. Elrod, Mary Elizabeth Mills, "The Mills-Elrod Family Tree," transcribed manuscript in the possession of this writer. This is a short collection of memoirs intended to record the genealogy of a family. However, since Mrs. Elrod was the daughter and wife of ministers, there are limited passages of value to the student of religious or social history.


4. Fisher, Oraneth A., manuscript sermon in the possession of Dr. Robert E. Ledbetter, Austin, Texas. This sermon was first delivered at Victoria, Texas, on April 10, 1869. Good example of a sermon of the Civil War period. The physical condition is poor and short passages are illegible.

5. Oraneth Fisher Papers, MSS in the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center of the University of Texas, Austin, Texas. A very good manuscript collection, although, in this writer's opinion, not as valuable as the Addison Papers.

B. Official Records

1. The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Nashville, 1874.

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3. The New Hymn-Book. Nashville, 1886. This is an abridgment of the Standard Hymn Book and is the one carried by the circuit riders.


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3. Bonner, Clint, A Hymn is Born. Chicago, 1952. Very interesting stories about the origin of hymns. Unfortunately, only a limited number of hymns are covered.


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B. Fiction


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D. Unpublished Material


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