

Court, Polk Co., Fl.; "History of Gapway Baptist Church", 1975, Lakeland, Fl.; Courrier Informant, 14 July 1922, Bartow, Fl.; Probate Judge's Office, Polk Co., Fl.

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WILLIAM HENRY HART AND THE HART CEMETERY

The following history was compiled and written by Vera Crews Bush in collaboration with Blanche Crews Scott, granddaughters of William Henry and Mary Hart. It was contributed by Mrs. Claud S. Hart of Frostproof and Mr. Charles Hart of Okeechobee, and is continued from Issue #21/22.

Small Churches did not have services but one Sunday a month, so one preacher could serve four different Churches each month. They were usually uneducated, but some were very dedicated and after earning a living for their families through the week would ride or drive many miles to preach a sermon which came from their hearts and not from a piece of paper. They were never paid a salary, or if they were it was very small. Mostly they depended on the generosity of the few parishioners who might have a few dollars to spare.

Although with no formal education Grandpa had ingenuity. One Spring we were having a severe drought; the orange trees were withered and the small fruit was falling at an alarming rate. This was his money crop so he thought up a plan to water his grove. He already had a well at the edge of the grove, so somewhere he acquired a pump and a motor, to pump the water. Piping was not available then so he went to town and bought yards and yards of heavy canvas. Canvas was a commodity which was used to make tents and tarpaulins to cover the wagons with. It was not entirely water proof as the water would gradually soak through, and this was what he wanted it to do.

As granddaughter, Blanche Crews Scott, remembers it: he tore the canvas into strips and Grandma and Aunt Ann sewed the strips together on the sewing machine, then folded the torn edges together and stitched an inch or so from the edge. This made a long tube, through which the water flowed, when it was fastened on to a pipe extending out from the pump. Shallow furrows were ploughed between the rows of trees and these tubes laid in them. By the time the water reached the end of the tube most of it had seeped out. When they wanted to move it to another furrow, she remembers it as a heavy, muddy, sticky mess. He was perhaps the first one in this part of Florida to irrigate.

Blanche also remembers seeing grandmother bake the communion bread. It was made of flour and water, and she would not give even a "little taste" of it.

She also tells of Grandpa's honesty. Once when he started to pay his taxes he went out and counted his cattle but when he got to the tax office he couldn't remember if it was 44 or 45, so he told them 45.

October 10, 1897 when Walter Hart the eldest brother married Helen Skipper, eldest daughter of David and Florida Smith Skipper, it left only Anne, the half-sister, and Roy who was then fourteen years old. Anne being the eldest had always been the mainstay of the family. If Grandpa felt any different towards her, none of the family knew it, and she called him "Pa" like all the others did. To all the grandchildren she was our "beloved" Aunt Ann. Of course we loved grandpa and grandma but Aunt Ann petted and humored us so she was very "special" to us.

Grandmother was ill quite often during the last years of her life, so Ann did all the house work and helped with the outside work too.