

REVEREND JAMES R. BARROW

Born: 25 December, 1801---Washington County, Georgia

Died: 30 July, 1884---Bowdon, Georgia

Buried: Bowdon Baptist Church Cemetery

Married: 2 January, 1825---Lucinda “Lucy” Bivins Baldwin County

Born: 1805---Died: 21 December, 1873---Bowdon

Buried: Bowdon Baptist Church Cemetery

James R. Barrow, who was known as “Jimmy”, was born on Christmas Day, 1801, three days before the death of his father, Moses Barrow, a Revolutionary War veteran of North Carolina. After the Revolutionary War, veteran Moses drew Washington County, GA land in a land lottery. The family moved to Georgia around 1798 where Jimmy, the last of the children, was born. In only a short time after Moses’ death, Jimmy’s mother, Martha Smith Barrow, married Mr. Charles Thompson, a friend of the family. The younger children including Jimmy, moved to the Thompson home near High Shoals, GA and the older ones went to live with their uncle, James Barrow, a wealthy land owner who lived near Milledgeville. When he was around 10 years old, his mother passed away and Jimmy and the other Barrow children went to Uncle James’ home to live there until older brother, Jacob, became of age and became their legal guardian.

James became a mechanic by trade and in 1825 married Miss “Lucy” Bivins in Milledgeville. They moved to Upson County, GA where James was baptized in the Antioch Baptist Church. In the 1826 Land Lottery, which opened up the western part of northwest Georgia as the last land taken from the Creek and Cherokee Indians, “The Orphans of Moses Barrow” Revolutionary Soldier drew two lots of land in Carroll County, one in what would later be known as the Smithfield community and the other in the Jake community. James and his family, which now numbered three daughters, moved to the Smithfield farm. (The *Christian Index* article, a copy of which is submitted with this bio, is not correct on the date that he moved to Carroll County. We believe that the move was somewhere around 1835?)

Soon James became severely handicapped by what was know back then as “rheumatism” and was unable to farm. He purchased a two acre lot from Mr. Seborn Smith for \$5.00 per acre. This lot was located west of the crossroads, on today’s College Street, which became the center of the town of Bowdon and is where the current “Barrow House” and the neighboring houses to the west are located. He built a cabin where the brick house of Dr. Smith is located. He and “Lucy” now had another daughter and three sons.

To make ends meet, James had taken up the profession of “Spreading the Gospel” years before he was ordained by the Carrollton Church in 1850. For instance, in Dr. James Bonner’s history of Carroll County, *Georgia’s Last Frontier*, he states that James R. Barrow in 1847 was the first pastor of the Upper Tallapoosa Missionary Baptist Church. This church was soon closed and moved to Carrollton where it became “The Baptist Church of Christ of Carrollton” or the today’s First Baptist Church of Carrollton. He had also preached at and attended the Eden Baptist Church which was located south of Bowdon near the Tallapoosa River on the Bowdon-Tyus Road. He was among the

members of Eden who were granted permission to leave that church and form the Bowdon Baptist Church in 1860. We know that he preached at the Bowdon Missionary Baptist Church after its formation.

As mentioned in the *Christian Index* article, he was a missionary for the new lands in Western Georgia and Eastern Alabama. As a Circuit Riding Spreader of the Gospel, he helped establish numerous churches in the newly opened lands in Alabama. He later preached wherever there was an opportunity. There are saved newspaper articles of his preaching as far away from Bowdon as Tuskegee, AL and many different locations in between. His hands and legs were so drawn that he had to have assistance in getting onto his horse.

He lived to be over 83 years old. His cousin, Dr. David Barrow, Chancellor of the Georgia University System, said of him in a letter, "The old preacher is badly crippled and has trouble making his rounds but never misses a calling." He goes on to say, "He can quote entire chapters of the Bible from memory." He is buried in the Bowdon Baptist Church cemetery alongside "Lucy" who had met a terrible death when fatally burned while working around a wash pot.

An interesting story passed down over the generations on the Reverend Barrow is in regards to his circuit riding on or about April 27, 1865 during the Civil War. Federal General Croxton and about 1.500 Yankee cavalymen were raiding and burning through Alabama and Western Georgia. General Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Court House on April 9 and the war for all practical purposes was over but the Yankees wanted to destroy as much of the South that they possibly could before the war officially ended. The old parson was making his rounds riding on a fine horse in Trickum Valley, Alabama where he met a squad of the raiders. One of the soldiers noticed the preacher's fine saddle and it being in much better shape than the one he had, ordered the old man off his horse and exchanged his worn out saddle for the good one. This made the old preacher mad and he shouted, "You boys will go to hell for what you have done today!" The young Yankee soldier who had taken the saddle then said, "If I am going to hell, I will need a better horse to ride." He then took the Reverend's good horse leaving him with a worn out one along with the sorry saddle. This story was passed down through the generations as a lesson that it is sometimes better just to keep your mouth shut.

Hugh W. Barrow Great-great-grandson of Reverend James R. Barrow
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