

Theophilus Brown Larimore

1843-1929



T. B. Larimore

Biographical Sketch Of The Life Of T.B. Larimore

Perhaps no man of *recent* generations has come from such low depths of poverty and obscurity and has risen to such heights of fame in the brotherhood as T. B. Larimore. He was born on July 10, 1843, in East Tennessee. Little is known of his parents.

His early advantages were very gloomy and his poverty discouraging, yet through it all he arose to heights of great prominence and service among his fellows upon

earth.

He worked on a farm in East Tennessee during his early youth and went to school only ten or twelve weeks in the year. He studied hard at night, not only while he was in school, but during the entire year. At the age of sixteen he entered Mossy Crock Baptist College in East Tennessee. He walked from his home to the college. He walked forty miles the first day, starting early in the morning and walking until late in the evening. He received a diploma from this college. During his sojourn as a student in Mossy Creek Baptist College he sought religion after the fashion of that day, but failed to get it. However, he made a firm resolution to live right and honor God so long as he lived upon the earth. When the Civil War began, he entered the service of the Confederate Army, and remained in it until the close of the war. On his twenty-first birthday anniversary-July 10, 1864-he obeyed the gospel. He began preaching in 1866, and in the fall of the same year he entered Franklin *College*, near Nashville, Tenn.

Brother Larimore remained in school at Franklin College about two years. [Tolbert Fanning](#) was president of the college at that time. Through patient and diligent efforts he made rapid progress in all of his courses. He often said that Tolbert Fanning was one of the best teachers that he ever had. He was graduated with honors in 1867. He was chosen to deliver the valedictory address at the graduating exercises. After leaving Franklin College, he went to North Alabama and preached the gospel with much power and persuasion.



While in that section of the State he became acquainted with the [Srygley](#) family. In the fall of 1868 he began teaching with [J. M. Pickens](#) at Mountain Home, in Lawrence County, Ala. He remained there only one year. In 1869 he went to West Tennessee and taught for a short while. He was next found at Stantonville, Tenn., where he taught for ten months. He next went to Florence, Ala., and on January 1, 1871, he opened a school and called it "Mars Hill Academy." He continued here for a few years, and as his school grew he changed its name to "Mars Hill College." Mars Hill College continued for a period of sixteen years—from 1871 to 1887. Hundreds of young men were trained in this college by Brother Larimore. The lamented E. A. Elam taught for a while with him there. This college did more for young people in that section of the country than all other schools there. The usual branches of study were taught, also the Bible. Brother Larimore emphasized the study of two books above all others. These were the English Bible and Webster's Dictionary. These who had thorough courses in these two books, together with the few allied courses, were far better educated than those who have taken many courses according to our modern system of education.



Larimore Home In Florence, Alabama, Today A Historical Treasure

Brother Larimore began preaching soon after he was baptized, and his preaching attracted much attention from the first. His humble manner and pious behavior gave him ready and easy access to the hearts of the people. He walked from Tennessee into North Alabama, where he held his first meeting. One has described him as follows: "On his face there was a settled expression of goodness and melancholy which touched the hearts of the people with a feeling of sympathy and love. There

was an indescribable and irresistible pathos in his voice, manner, and general appearance which melted audiences to tears



and moved hearts long hardened by sin to repentance at the appeal of the gospel." He preached where an opportunity was given him. He preached in schoolhouses, under brush arbors, and in log cabins. He baptized hundreds of people and established many congregations in the hill country of Alabama in a short time.

While teaching at Mars Hill he preached every Sunday, often three times on Sunday, and during vacation he devoted his entire time to evangelistic work. After closing his school at Mars Hill in 1887, he gave his entire time to preaching the gospel. His field of labor increased and the calls for his services multiplied until he had much more work than he could possibly do. Perhaps he preached more sermons to more hearers and baptized more people than any other preacher of his day. He traveled extensively and preached in Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Arkansas, and Washington, D. C. He preached "from Maine to Mexico and from Canada to Cuba." His program for preaching was twice every day and three times every Sunday. His longest meeting was conducted at Sherman, Texas. This meeting began on January 3, 1894, and closed on June 7, five months and four days. During this meeting he preached three hundred and thirty-three sermons, preaching twice every day and three times every Sunday; and there were more than two hundred additions to the church during the meeting. His next longest meeting was conducted at Los Angeles, Calif. This meeting began on January 3, 1895, and closed on April 17, three months and fourteen days. In this meeting he followed his usual program of preaching

twice every day and three times on Sundays; and there were one hundred and twenty persons baptized during the meeting.



Brother Larimore was kind and gentle in his manner and very pleasing in his address. It was not his style or disposition to engage in controversy or to be offensive in his preaching. He chose his subject and presented it in a simple, straightforward way without turning aside to notice any religious error. He preached the truth with earnestness and clearness and said little or nothing about any of the popular religious errors of the day. He was an eloquent speaker, with music and charm in the well chosen phraseology with which he clothed the thoughts which he gleaned from the Book of God. All who heard him loved him and felt that it was good to hear him.

He wrote no books, and yet a number of books have been written about him. These books are as follows: "Larimore and His Boys," "Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore" (three volumes), and "Maine to Mexico and Canada to Cuba." All of these books breathe the gentle spirit of the great man whose life and work inspired them. They are rich in spiritual blessings to those who may read them.

Brother Larimore died on March 18, 1929, in Santa Ana, Calif. He was in his eighty-sixth year. Brother Larimore

still lives in the hearts of thousands whom he taught the word of God and encouraged to live faithful to God. He left his imprint on his students and all who listened earnestly to his preaching. In a few things he excelled most men, and in many other things he was the peer. The world is better and happier because T. B. Larimore lived in it.

From Biographical Sketches Of Gospel Preachers, H. Leo Boles, Gospel Advocate, c. 1932, pages 332-336



Last Photo of T.B. & Emma Larimore, November, 1928

Directions To Grave

T.B. & his second wife Emma, are buried in Santa Ana, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. I was able to visit the Larimore grave plot on April 11, 2002, on my way to the south Pacific island of Tutuila, American Samoa for evangelistic work. Terry Straight and I found the grave located at Fairhaven Cemetery, not far off the Garden Grove Freeway. Since I came in from Los Angeles

International Airport, I will give directions from there.

From LAX head east on Century Blvd. Go about 2 miles and you will come to where you can see I-405 straight ahead, but you will need to turn right on S. La Cienega Blvd. Then take the south ramp to I-405 headed toward Long Beach. You will travel about 24 miles on I-405. After entering Orange County, take CA-22 East, the (Garden Grove Freeway). Go about 11.5 miles, just past I-5, take the Glassell Street/Grand Ave. exit. Turn right, and immediately get into you left lane to turn left on Fairhaven Ave. Go about 1/2 mile and you will see Fairhaven Cemetery on the right.

**Fairhaven Cemetery
1702 East Fairhaven
Ave.
Santa Ana, California
Office Phone #
(714) 633-1442**



The beautiful old cemetery, founded in 1911, was just a few years old when Larimore died. It is one of the most beautiful parks I've seen. There are over 100 different types of trees, from all over the world. When entering the park you will see the office just on the left hand side. Travel straight ahead, bearing to the right travel between Lawn L and M. Just after Lawn M is Lawn P on the right hand side. Travel to the center of the P section and stop. The Larimore plot is central to the section, very near the street. The plot is located at Lawn P - Plot 89-4. Get Cemetery map [here!](#)

While at this cemetery be sure to visit the grave of one of Emma Page's nephews, who was also a great gospel preacher in the Santa Ana area, [James Harding Sewell, Sr.](#)



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