

SIGNS OF THE TIMES HISTORY

The Publishers and their dates are presented first in this brief history. This is followed by the lists of the Editors, Associate Editors, Contributing Editors, Circulating Office Managers & Editors along with their dates of service. (A chart is furnished to help visually relate the various times of service of the Publishers, Editors and Associate Editors etc. to one another.) This history is concluded with a short biography of each Editor. The biographies were taken primarily from the "Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers", and from obituaries of the Ministers.

The first Publisher of the "Signs of the Times" was the founder, owner and operator, Elder Gilbert Beebe. He served faithfully from 1832 until his death in 1881 -- almost fifty years. Elder Beebe's Sons were the owners and operators from 1881 until 1904. J.E. Beebe & Co. was the owner and operator from 1904 until 1942. Elder R.L. Dodson purchased the "Signs" in 1942 and published it until his death in 1950. It was incorporated in 1949, and given to the Old School Baptists, and operates under the name "Signs of the Times, Inc."

Elder Gilbert Beebe, the founder of the "Signs of the Times", was the sole Editor from its establishment in 1832 until his death in 1881. His sons, Brother B.L. Beebe and Elder W.L. Beebe were the Co-Editors from 1881 until 1896 when Elder W.L. Beebe resigned. Brother B.L. Beebe continued to serve until his death in 1904. Elder F.A. Chick became Co-Editor with Brother B.L. Beebe and Elder W.L. Beebe in 1894. Elder Benton Jenkins also began to serve as Co-Editor in 1894 and did so until his death in 1897. Elder H.C. Ker began to serve as Co-Editor with Elder Chick in 1906 and served with him until Elder Chick's death in 1914. Elder H.H. Lefferts began to serve as Co-Editor in 1914 and served with Elder Ker until 1922 when Elder Ker resigned. Then Elder Lefferts served as Editor until 1936 when he resigned. Elders: R.L. Dodson, G. Ruston, and C.W. Vaughn served as Associate Editors with Elder Lefferts beginning in 1923. In 1936 Elder R.L. Dodson became the Editor and in 1942 he purchased the "Signs" and served as the Editor from then until his death in 1950. Elders G. Ruston, C.W. Vaughn, and D.V. Spangler served with Elder Dodson as Associate Editors at various times during his term as Editor. Elder D.V. Spangler became Co-Editor in 1951 and served until 1983. Elder J.D. Wood served with him as Co-Editor from 1951 until 1975. Elder J.F. Poole also served with Elder Spangler as a Co-Editor from 1977 to 1983. Elders W.D. Griffin, E.J. Lambert, H.O. Nash, D.A. McColl, J.S. McColl, R.H. Campbell and J.L. Hamrick served as Associate Editors at various times from 1951 until 1983. Elder K.R. Key was appointed Editor in 1983 and served until his death in 2011. He served with the following Associate Editors during his term: Elders W.D. Griffin, R.H. Campbell, D.B. Stokes, J.L. Hamrick, C.C. Wilbanks, C.B. Davis, J.B. Farmer and Cleo Robertson. Elder Cleo Robertson was appointed Editor in 2011 and serves until the present (2013) with Associate Editor Elder J.B. Farmer.

The following is a list of Elders who were Associate Editors along with their dates of service: R.L. Dodson (1923-1936); G. Ruston (1923-1943 & 1957-1973); C.W. Vaughn (1923-1949); D.V. Spangler (1936-1951); W.D. Griffin (1943-1989); J.S. Hunnicutt (1944-1945); E.J. Lambert (1946-1980); H.O. Nash (1950-1957); D.A. McColl (1975-1979); J.S. McColl (1975-1979); R.H. Campbell (1980-2010); D.B. Stokes (1983-1986); J.L. Hamrick (1980-1987); C.C. Wilbanks (1989-2004); C.B. Davis (1990-2010); J.B. Farmer (2001-present 2013); and Cleo Robertson (2005-2011).

Elder J.D. Wood (1979-1984) and Elder D.V. Spangler (1984-1985) served as Contributing Editors. Elder D. Smith (1977-1979), Elder J.R. Williams (1979-2001), Elder W.H. Terry (2001-2007), and Brother T. Horton (2007-present 2013) served as Circulating Office Managers and Editors.



Elder Gilbert Beebe
November 25, 1800 to May 2, 1881

Gilbert Beebe was born in Norwich, Connecticut. His parents were David and Eunice Case Beebe. In his seventh year he was given a hope, and in his eleventh year he was united with the Baptist Church in Norwich, Connecticut and was baptized by Elder John Sterry. He was licensed to preach in his eighteenth year and was soon called to the service of several churches. In 1823 he was married to Phebe A. Cunningham, and to this union were added thirteen children, eight of whom survived him. They are listed in the order of their ages as follows: Harriet M. Larue, Elder W.L. Beebe, Phebe A. McNally, R.J. Beebe, G.M. Beebe, Mary V. Little, Frances C. Kellum, and B.E. Beebe. Also in 1823, he was ordained to the pastoral care of the Baptist Church of Ramapo. During his ministry Elder Beebe faithfully served the following Baptist churches: the church in Norwich; Ebenezer, Ramapo, New Vernon and Middletown and Wallkill in New York; the Third Baptist Church in Baltimore; Upper Broad Run in Virginia; and Shiloh in Washington, D.C.

The separation of the Missionary Baptists from the Old Order took place in 1832 during the ministry of Elder Beebe. In this year he began to publish the periodical called the "Signs of the Times." He served as the owner, publisher and editor for about fifty years until the Lord removed him from service by death. His youngest son, B.L. Beebe, was the Associate Editor with him for the last four years of his life. Elder Beebe was a kind, sound and faithful minister of the Gospel, and suffered much at the hands of many who opposed him and the truth he was so wonderfully blessed to defend. He showed himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

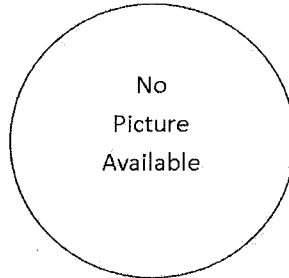
Elder Beebe said in his declining years, "My voice will soon be silenced in death, my pen into the hands of another, and I hope abler writer, but the truths for which I have so long contended will be lasting as the days of eternity: and when all the deceptive and luring doctrines and institutions of men shall be exposed, and all who have trusted in a refuge of lies shall bewail their folly and call for the rocks and mountains to hide them from Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the presence of the Lamb, those who know and love the truth shall in truth rejoice forevermore."



Elder William L. Beebe
October 3, 1829 to March 28, 1901

William Beebe, the son of Elder Gilbert Beebe was baptized, at the age of twelve, by his father into the fellowship of the New Vernon Old School Baptist Church of New York. At about the age of twenty he began to exercise his gift of preaching. He moved to the state of Georgia in 1852, and for many years

preached in churches there, and also published and edited the "Southern Baptist Messenger", a periodical devoted to the Old School Baptist cause. He was compelled to cease publication in 1862, during the Civil War, after he was captured by the Union Army, and held as a prisoner of war for nine months. In 1865 he was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry by the Hollis Spring Church in Newton Co., GA. In 1881 he moved to Middletown, NY where he, in connection with his brother Benton L. Beebe, edited and published the "Signs of the Times" from about 1881 until 1896. Elder Benton Jenkins also served as Co-Editor with Elder W.L. Beebe from 1894-1896. Elder Beebe served Ebenezer, Warwick, Shoal Creek, Hollis Springs and other churches. He was a devoted husband, loving father and kind friend, and a faithful minister and servant of God.



Brother Benton L. Beebe
March 10, 1844 to January 5, 1904

Benton Beebe was born in New Vernon, Orange County, NY, and was the Son of Elder Gilbert Beebe and Phoebe A. Cunningham Beebe. In 1860 he married Josephine Travis and they had two children, Lillian J. and Gilbert. Brother Beebe suffered for much during his life from ill health caused by kidney disease, which he endured with much fortitude, seldom speaking of it. He was a member of the Middletown & Wallkill Church for over forty years, and served well as deacon for several years until his death. He also faithfully served as Associate Editor with his father for the "Signs of the Times" from 1877 until 1881, and as Co-Editor with others from 1881 until his death in 1904. He served with his brother Elder W.L. Beebe from 1881 until 1896, and with Elder F.A. Chick from 1894 until 1904, and with Elder Benton Jenkins from 1894 until 1897. Elder H. M. Curry, a close friend of Brother Beebe, wrote, "His work in this most arduous service of the church and cause of the truth has been most efficient and satisfactory indeed, and bears testimony to the fact that he was a man of ripe judgment, rare discernment, meek sincerity and noble steadfastness in spiritual matters." Elder H.C. Ker wrote in Brother Beebe's obituary: "In all our life we have never known a more noble, kindhearted, loving and hospitable brother than Benton L. Beebe." "He lived and died a firm believer in the absolute predestination of all things, eternal vital union of Christ and the Church, and salvation by grace and grace alone, for time and eternity."



Elder F.A. Chick
August 10, 1845 to April 14, 1914

F.A. Chick was born in the township of Embden, Somerset County, Maine. His father was Abraham Chick and his mother was Betsey Quint Chick, a sister of Elder William Quint, who was pastor of the church at North Berwick, Maine for more than forty years. He was made aware of his sinfulness at about

eight years of age, and was given a hope in Jesus his Savior at about age sixteen. He was baptized in September 1863 by Elder Quint into the fellowship of the North Berwick Church. He began preaching in 1866, was married to Amanda Williams in 1867, and was ordained in 1868 to the full work of the gospel ministry by Elders Philander Hartwell, W.J. Purington, William Quint, Hiram Campbell, John A. Badger and J.N. Badger. Immediately after his ordination, he was called to the care of the church at Black Rock, the Ebenezer Church in Baltimore City, and the Patapsco Church in Baltimore County, MD. He served these churches for about twenty-eight years. The larger portion of this time he also served the Shiloh Church in Washington City, D.C. as a supply. In 1896 he began to serve the church at Hopewell, NJ and the second Hopewell Church a few miles away, and also the churches at Harbourton, Cedar Grove and Mount Rose. In 1894 Elder Chick began to serve as Co-Editor of the "Signs of the Times" with Elder Benton Jenkins, Elder W.L. Beebe, and Brother B.L. Beebe. Elder H.C. Ker began to serve as Co-Editor with Elder Chick in 1906. Elder Chick continued to serve until his death in 1914. He was a faithful defender of the doctrine of our Lord Jesus, a forceful speaker, a fluent writer and a lovely, useful man.



Elder Benton Jenkins
July 11, 1844 to January 8, 1897

Benton Jenkins was born in Monroe, Orange County, NY July 11, 1844. His parents were Josiah and Eliza Forshee Jenkins and were of the Episcopal profession in which he was raised. Having received the need of a better righteousness than the observance of outward forms, he received a hope in the blood of Jesus, and was baptized in the fellowship of the Old School Baptist Church in Middletown, by the pastor, Gilbert Beebe, May 26, 1867, and remained in that church until his death. He was ordained to the full exercise of his proven gift of preaching the gospel in 1879. He served as Co-Editor of the "Signs of the Times" with Elder W.L. Beebe from 1894 until 1896, and with Brother B.L. Beebe and Elder F.A. Chick from 1894 until his death in 1897. He was known not only as an esteemed brother and a fellow laborer, but also as a tried and reliable counselor, and as a friend whose love never faltered.



Elder H. Claude Ker
December 1, 1860 to February 27, 1946

H.C. Ker was born in Quantico, Wicomico County, MD, and his parents were Dr. Samuel Ker and Louisa Davis Ker. His father was an ordained minister of the New School Baptists. H.C. was united with them at age 13, but by 1890 his mind became exercised in spiritual things. He was married to Emma J. Marvel on May 26, 1886, and to this union was born Louisa and Stuart. He began to visit all denominations in reach, hoping to find somewhere that would give his conscience ease and rest. But he

found none who preached what he thought the Bible taught: none expressed themselves as he felt, until at last he found companionship among the Old School Baptists. He was received into the fellowship of Little Creek Church, Sussex County, DE and was baptized by Elder A.B. Francis, May 20, 1894. In June, 1896, he was licensed, and on November 17, 1897 was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry by Elders A.B. Francis, E. Rittenhouse, S.H. Durand, T.M. Poulson, and W.W. Meredith. He served Black Rock Church, Baltimore County, MD., and the Middletown and New Vernon churches located in Orange County, NY, and the church at Woonbine, MA. He also served the following churches: Little Creek, Rewastico, Delmar, Snow Hill, Broad Creek, Southhampton in PA, and Kingwood in NJ. He served with Elder F.A. Chick as Co-Editor of the "Signs of the Times" from 1906 until 1914. After Elder Chick died in 1914, Elder Ker served with Elder H.H. Lefferts until 1922 when Elder Ker resigned. He also served as Moderator of the Warwick Old School Baptist Association. He was a gifted writer and preacher and was much beloved by the churches he served.



Elder Horace H. Lefferts
April 23, 1879 to August 18, 1949

Horace Lefferts was born in Bucks County, PA and was the son of Geo. W. and Sarah P. Lefferts. His parents were members of Southampton Old School Baptist Church. In his seventeenth year of age, while a student at the West Chester State Normal School preparing for the profession of teaching, he was given a sweet hope in Jesus, and four years later, December, 1900, united with Southampton Old School Baptist Church and was baptized by Elder F.A. Chick. The pastor of the Southampton Church, Elder S.H. Durand, was ill and not able to administer the ordinance. Horace was licensed to preach in April, 1902, and ordained June 5, 1903. In December, 1905, he was called to the pastoral care of the Old School Baptist Church at Warwick, NY. He accepted in April, 1906, and moved there the following year. Elder Lefferts served as Co-Editor of the "Signs of the Times" with Elder H.C. Ker from 1914 until 1922 when Elder Ker resigned, and was Editor from 1922 until he resigned in 1936. He served with Associate Editors Elders R.L. Dodson, G. Ruston, and C.W. Vaughn from 1923 until 1936. Elder Lefferts also served as the Moderator of the Warwick Old School Baptist Association. He was a gifted soldier of Jesus and was satisfied with the doctrine and practice of the Apostolic Church.



Elder R. Lester Dodson
May 12, 1886 to December 19, 1950

R.L. Dodson was born in Ringgold near Danville, VA. His parents were Robert Leonard and Eliza Shelton Dodson. He married Beulah Robins in 1909, and to this union was born a son, R.L. Dodson Jr.

In early life he united with the New School Baptist Church, but was later persuaded by experience that they were not his people. He was drawn by experience and the doctrine preached to unite with the Old School Baptist Church at Cane Creek near his boyhood home, and was baptized in 1908 by the Pastor, Elder J.M. Lewis. He moved to New York City in 1911 and was received by letter into the Ebenezer Old School Baptist Church in 1914 and remained a member there until his death. He was licensed to preach in 1918, ordained in 1921 and accepted the call as Pastor there in 1923. He also served the Middletown and Wallkill Church and the Warwick Church about 19 years. He was Co-Associate Editor of the "Signs of the Times" from 1923 until 1936 with Elders G. Ruston and C.W. Vaughn. During this time Elder H.H. Lefferts was serving as the Editor. After Elder Lefferts resigned in 1936, Elder Dodson became the Editor, and in 1942 he purchased the "Signs" and served as the Editor and Publisher from then until his death. Some time before his death, Elder Dodson arranged to have the paper incorporated into a non-profit organization so it would continue to belong to the Old School Baptists when he died. Elders G. Ruston, C.W. Vaughn, and D.V. Spangler served with Elder Dodson as Co-Associate Editors at various times while Elder Dodson was the Editor. Elder D.V. Spangler wrote the following about Elder Dodson after his death. "I have never known a person who gave himself wholly to the cause as did our brother. His labor was a labor of love, and whether he agreed with all who wrote in our periodicals, there was always manifest in his writings, and preaching the spirit of forbearance and brotherly kindness toward his brethren."



Elder David V. Spangler
January 9, 1902 to April 18, 1985

David Vinton Spangler was born in Spray, VA, and was the son of Elder Jacob F. Spangler and Roberta Howery Spangler. In 1918, he joined the Danville Primitive Baptist Church and later moved his membership to the Dan River Church. On the fourth Sunday in June, 1920, he first spoke to the congregation at the Dan River Church. Elder David Spangler served the Dan River Church from 1923 until his death in 1985. He also served the following churches: Banister Springs Church, Malmaison Church, Reidsville Church, Monticello Church, Durham Church, Shiloh Church, Gooch Memorial Church, Welch Tract Church, Salisbury Church, Nassaonga Church, Snow Hill Church, Lambs Grove Church, Cascade Church, Spray Church, Macedonia Church, and Danville Church.

Elder Spangler served as an Associate Editor for the "Signs of the Times" from 1936 until 1950 while Elder R.L. Dodson was the Editor. He also served with Co-Associate Editors Elders: G. Ruston, C.W. Vaughn, W.D. Griffin, J.S. Hunnicutt, E.J. Lambert and H.O. Nash at various times during this period.

In 1951 Elder Spangler was appointed Co-Editor of the "Signs" and served until 1983. Serving with him as Co-editors were: Elders J.D. Wood (1951-1975) and J.F. Poole (1977-1983). Also serving with him at various times during his term as Editor were Associate Editors Elders: G. Ruston, W.D. Griffin, E.J. Lambert, H.O. Nash, D.A. McColl, J.S. McColl, R. H. Campbell, and J.L. Hamrick. Elder J.D. Wood also served as the Contributing Editor during part of Elder Spangler's term. The Circulating Office Managers and Editors who served with Elder Spangler were Elders: D. Smith (1977-1979) and J.R. Williams (1979-2001). Elder Spangler also served as a Contributing Editor for the "Signs" from 1984 until his death in 1985. He was much loved by those who knew him in truth.



Elder John D. Wood
June 3, 1898 to July 3, 1985

John D. Wood was born in West Virginia, and in 1916 he united with the Roanoke Church and was baptized by Elder J.C. Hurst. In April 1918 he was licensed to preach and consequently ordained at Roanoke Church in 1931. He married Virginia Carter Wood and to this union was given a daughter, Virginia Gladding and a son, John D. Wood Jr. Elder Wood served the following churches: Bellview Church (now Laurel Ridge), Little Hope Church; Black Rock Church, Butler, MD; New Valley, Mount Zion and Frying Pan Churches in VA; Rock Spring Church in PA, and Ebenezer Church in Baltimore, MD. He also served the Needmore and Sidling Hill Churches in the mountains of Pennsylvania on fifth Sundays. While pastoring the churches in upper Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, he made his home in Manassas, VA where he and sister Virginia Wood entertained many brethren. He served as clerk of the Pigg River Association from 1937 until 1978. He served as Co-Editor of the "Signs of the Times" from 1951 until 1975 with Elder D.V. Spangler. He also served as the Contributing Editor from 1979 until 1984. During his time of service, he was accompanied by Associate Editors, Elders: W.D. Griffin, E.J. Lambert, H.O. Nash, R.H. Campbell, D.B. Stokes, and J.L. Hamrick. Elders J.R. Williams and D. Smith, the Circulation Office Managers and Editors, also served with him. Elder and Sister Wood traveled long distances to faithfully serve many churches until his failing health prevented him from traveling. All who knew him will miss his gentleness, sincerity and sweet humility. He was truly a servant of God. He was buried in the Black Rock Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery in Butler, Maryland.



Elder James F. Poole
June 1, 1934 to present (2013)

James Poole was born in Shawnee, OK. His parents were James and Mary Poole. He was raised a Methodist and attended the Bible Baptist Seminary in Georgia. He united with the Grace Primitive Baptist Church in southern Georgia and then moved to serve the Bethany Primitive Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA. Both these churches were conditional in their doctrine. He was excluded from the latter for believing the absolute predestination of all things. Elder Poole remembers believing in the sovereignty of God before he ever knew of the Old School Baptist Churches. In 1969 he was received by the Dan River Church in Virginia, and was ordained an Elder. He served the following churches: Welsh Tract, Salisbury, Nassaonga, Snow Hill. He is presently serving the Snow Hill Church. He served as Co-Editor

of the “Signs of the Times” with Elder D.V. Spangler from 1977 until 1983. Elder J.D. Wood served with Elder Poole as Contributing Editor from 1979 until 1983. The Associate Editors with him at various times were Elders W.D. Griffin, E.J. Lambert, D.A. McColl, J.S. McColl, R.H. Campbell, and J.L. Hamrick. Elders J.R. Williams and D. Smith, the Circulation Office Managers and Editors, also served with him. Elder Poole has been a strong proponent of the absolute predestination of all things for many years.



Elder Kenneth Ray Key, Sr.
January 22, 1923 to April 3, 2011

Kenneth Key was born in Surry County, NC, and was the son of Ransome and Ida Elizabeth Lowe Key. His parents were of the Primitive Baptist faith. Kenneth and his wife Nellie Mae Jobe Key made Greensboro, NC their lifetime residence, and were baptized into the fellowship of the Greensboro Church. After a three-year period of intense suffering both physically and mentally, he was made to yield to the call to the ministry. Kenneth was ordained to the ministry of the gospel and served as a Primitive Baptist Elder for sixty years. He faithfully served as Pastor of the Greensboro, Dan River, Big Meadows and Moon’s Creek churches. He also served as the Editor of the “Signs of the Times” from 1983 until his death in 2011. He served with the following Associate Editors during his term as Editor: Elders W.D. Griffin, R.H. Campbell, D.B. Stokes, J.L. Hamrick, C.C. Wilbanks, C.B. Davis, J.B. Farmer and Cleo Robertson. He also served with Circulation Office Managers and Editors: Elder W.H. Terry and Brother Tony Horton. Elder Key was known as a preacher of love, and throughout his life among the Old Baptists he was greatly beloved for the truth’s sake.



Elder Cleo Robertson
August 27, 1940 to Present (2013)

Cleo Robertson was born in Caswell County, NC and is the son of Clifton and Sadie Robertson. His parents and grandparents were Primitive Baptists. He married Jeannette Curtis in 1962 and their children are Sandra Kay Sokolovic and William Arthur Robertson. After years of searching among other people, he was brought back to the Old Baptists, where he was given a church home. He was received by the Gilliam Primitive Baptist Church in September of 1974 and was baptized by Elder Wallis Smith in October the same year. Brother Cleo had been down-hearted since his reception by the church, thinking he had deceived the people. On the cloudy day of his baptism, the clouds parted, the sun shone, and he

was blessed to hear, within himself, the words, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise" to his great joy and comfort. He was ordained to the gospel ministry in 1984 at the Durham Primitive Baptist Church. He served the Salisbury Old School Primitive Baptist Church in Salisbury, MD for 20 years. He presently serves the Greensboro Church, the Shiloh Church, the Big Meadows Church, the Pleasant Hill Church, and the Durham Primitive Baptist Church where he is a member. He was appointed Associate Editor of the "Signs of the Times" in 2005, and served with the Editor, Elder Kenneth Key, until Elder Key's death in 2011. He also served with Co-Associate Editors, Elders R.H. Campbell, C.B. Davis, and J.B. Farmer. Elder W. H. Hale also served with him as Circulation Office Manager and Editor during part of this time. Elder Robertson, after Elder Key's death, was appointed Editor of the "Signs", and faithfully serves until the present (2013). Elder C.B. Davis served as an Associate Editor with the Editor, Elder Robertson, until Elder Davis's death in 2010. The Associate Editor, Elder J.B. Farmer, continues to serve with Elder Robertson to the present time (2013). Elder Robertson is known as a faithful, sound, orderly, kind and lovely minister of the Gospel, and is greatly beloved by all who know him in truth.