

## 175 Years Young and Still Growing: The Story of First Baptist Church, Athens, 1830-2005

Dr. Ernest C. Hynds

*Sunday, October 16, 2005*

3:00 p.m.

Athens-Clarke County Library Auditorium



*First Baptist Church, ca. 1901  
from Hajos' photogravure of Athens*

Founded by members of Trail Creek Baptist Church and others Baptists in the area, First Baptist Church, Athens, and its members have helped to shape life and events in our city for the past 175 years. Constituted as Athens Baptist Church in January 1830 by 15 charter members, it began in a small frame building on the campus of the university. This dynamic church has maintained a strong presence in downtown Athens ever since, even as it launched mission churches as the congregation grew. Indeed, it is the “mother” of nine in the Athens area, including the East Athens, Milledge Avenue, Beech Haven, and West End Baptist churches. In the mid-nineteenth century, its sizable African-American membership formed an independent church, Hill First Baptist, which remains today in its original landmark building on North Pope Street.

The history of the First Baptist Church of Athens is characterized by its connection with the University of Georgia, an emphasis on missions and education, consistent leadership, and continued service to the community. The church marks its 175th year in 2005, and has planned numerous events to celebrate this milestone. Ernest C. Hynds, author of a history of First Baptist Church of Athens (forthcoming in 2006) will share his vast knowledge on the subject at the next meeting of the Athens Historical Society. Dr. Hynds is an engaging speaker who is certain to enlighten and entertain.

Ernest C. Hynds, a charter member of the Athens Historical Society, is professor emeritus and former head of the Department of Journalism at the Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Georgia. He is the author of *Antebellum Athens and Clarke County, Georgia* (1974, UGA Press) and contributed numerous articles about the history of Athens to the *Athens Banner-Herald* during the Bicentennial Celebration in 2001.

*Dr. Hynds will speak at the fall meeting of the Athens Historical Society on Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00 p.m. at the Athens-Clarke County Library. The lecture is open to the public free of charge. All are welcome.*


**Aftermath of the Hurricanes** – The National Society of American Archivists ([www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org)) and hundreds of volunteers have been working long hours since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to retrieve water-logged volumes and documents to prevent further damage from mold and dirt. The reports of flooding and other damage to New Orleans and other historic towns along the Gulf Coast should make us all reconsider what we should do to preserve our own priceless treasures and memories. While Athens probably will never experience ravages to the extent of those we’ve seen on the news for the past few weeks, a flooded basement, house fire, tornado, or theft could destroy heirlooms and records from our own past.

Photographs, videos, and written narratives can help others piece together the pattern of our lives. Take time this fall, before the family gathers for the holidays, to write down stories of days gone by, a special memory, notes about your ancestors, where the old sideboard in the dining room came from, etc., and make copies for members of your family. Be sure to include photos, if possible, and ask others in your family to do the same. If you’re on the Internet, why not create a website to share these treasures with your loved ones?

**Discover Hidden Treasures – Celebrating Georgia Archives Week Oct. 1-9.** Numerous events about preserving our history may be found on the UGA Library’s website at [www.libs.uga.edu/archivesweek/](http://www.libs.uga.edu/archivesweek/). The Athens-Clarke County Library hosted two programs in September about the resources to be found at the new Georgia Archives. Georgia historian Ken Thomas used resources at the Georgia Department of Archives and History in the course of his research for a 2004 episode of *History Detectives* (PBS). His work focused on a riding crop allegedly given to South Carolina congressman Preston Brooks to commemorate his caning of Charles Sumner of Massachusetts following a two-day filibuster attacking slavery in 1856. (See [http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/case/206\\_index.html](http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/case/206_index.html) for more information.)

**WANTED – Photos of past AHS events for the AHS Website** – The webmaster of the AHS website ([www.rootsweb.com/~gaahs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~gaahs)) would appreciate photos of charter members of the Society (see the list in the 2005 membership directory) to post on our website. We wish to salute them for their forethought and dedication in helping to preserve the history and treasures of Athens and Clarke County, Georgia. Photos and details of AHS field trips and other special events, such as dedications of historical markers, etc., also would be appreciated. Please call Eve Mayes at (706) 789-3452 after 7 p.m., or email her at [ebmayes@myexcel.com](mailto:ebmayes@myexcel.com) to contribute. Photos will be scanned and returned unharmed with the digital files on a floppy disk for your use.

**Upcoming Meetings** – Charlotte Thomas Marshall will speak on Oconee Hill Cemetery on January 15th and Milton Leathers will talk about Abraham Baldwin, one of the founders of UGA for our meeting on March 19th.



**In Memoriam** The Athens Historical Society notes with sadness the deaths of our members: Dr. John W. Bonner, Jr., on May 4, 2005; William H. Bonner, M.D., on Sept. 6, 2005; Robert H. Carson, Sr., on Oct. 17, 2004; Ruth F. Jackson on June 25, 2004; Alice Rowland Steiner Jacobs on Dec. 14, 2003; Wiggie C. Langdale on Feb. 25, 2005; Bronzie H. Ray on Dec. 24, 2004, and her husband, Clyde R. Ray, on Apr. 10, 2004; Richard S. Scott on April 8, 2004; Ramon C. Thompson, M.D., on Oct. 15, 2003; Nancy C. Turner on May 17, 2001; Richard V. Wellman on June 3, 2005; Genevieve Wilfong on June 27, 2004 and her sister, Cornelia Wilfong Scanlon, on Feb. 4, 2005.

***Don't forget – AHS membership makes a great gift for your favorite history buff!***

2005 Meetings	
January 16	✓
March 20	✓
May 15	✓
October 16	

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