

## History of Cloud Springs Church

As told by Reverend Frank Creighton

by Laura Brown in 1952

Transcribed by James M. Dunn Jr.

---

**F.C.** Sister **Brown**, I'd like for you to tell us, if you will, all that you can about the Cloud Springs Church and of course you know we're going to play this back for them one Wednesday night and if you will tell us, I believe about 1884, that you was telling while ago, when you was 18 year old that they started the church? Is that right?

**L.B.** Yes they, they, that's when they built it, was in 18, I joined it, and that's about when the time they built it. When I joined the Church. About 82.

**F.C.** About 82?

**L.B.** Yes.

**F.C.** Well, uh, would you tell us who give the land?

**L.B.** Yes, Mr. **Hargraves**, I think, was the man that give the land, then my father (**George Washington Kelley**) was the one that, he hauled the lumber and stuff, he built it. When they first built it, they built it for a school house and then in a little while they commenced having church services and then it was about, I reckon about, I think about, I was about 22 years old when I joined the church so the rest of 'em was before that.

**F.C.** Well, uh, where was the first church building?

**L.B.** Well, it was built up there, uh, just beyond Cloud Springs on the left-hand side a' going yond way.

**F.C.** In Ft. Oglethorpe, up there, somewhere?

**L.B.** Up there after you cross that spring branch, you remember Cloud Springs, all that down below that big hill, it was built on the left hand side, that was where the church was built. You know they came in, then the government took the land, why they moved it to where it is now. So then it got burnt down, and they had to, they built the rock church.

**F.C.** Do you remember the first pastor's name?

**L.B.** Yes, I know the first pastor's alright, **Trotter** was the first pastor.

**F.C.** Brother **Trotter**.

**L.B.** Yeah, brother **Trotter**.

**F.C.** You don't remember what they paid him then do you?

**L.B.** No, did they, he preached four or five years and then he went off a few years and they called him back again, but I can say one thing, he was a good preacher.

**F.C.** Mrs. **Velma Brown** was telling us, maybe, that you said something about at one time they disbanded the church? Is that right?

**L.B.** No, not that I know of.

**F.C.** Maybe some of them went to Boynton maybe, and then they come back and started again, or something like that?

**L.B.** I don't know of them ever disbanding after the church was started. That they ever disbanded and didn't have no church after Trotter started the church, why then, they kept on. It was started with fourteen members when they organized the church.

**F.C.** What was the first church made out of?

**L.B.** Well it was made out of lumber, my daddy (**George Washington Kelly**) sawed the lumber off of his place and hauled the logs there and built it. Just a plain boarded-up house, you know. The first one was and then they, the school, he always didn't like it about the school, my daddy didn't, they didn't have much fuel, you know, and he knowed to get the folks he always wanted, three months is all we have and he wanted them to hire the other one and none of em hardly helped about hiring anybody, or anything like that, and so after they built the church then they went to having school. That's what they built it to have school in but, they soon organized the church in it.

**F.C.** Say your father (**George Washington Kelly**) helped build the church?

**L.B.** Yes, he's the one that hauled the timber off a his, he had a under lease place up, he owned two farms, you know where that place is, after, on the right side of log hewn house, well that's my old home. Then he owned a farm on the road right there, Park City church, on the fur corner of it. Well there's where he

hauled the logs from there, and had lumber sawed and that's when they all went in and built the church.

**F.C.** Could you tell us who the fourteen members were?

**L.B.** Yes, I, yes I could remember all of um. If you want to know it.

**F.C.** Alright.

**L.B.** Well my daddy, mother (**Amanda L. E. Kelley**) and one sister (**Gertie Mae Kelley**).

**F.C.** What was your sister's name?

**L.B.** Mae.

**F.C.** She wasn't the one I met?

**L.B.** No, she was not down there, she was the first one to confess, she was the first and then they was **Hib Lemons** and his wife and then they was **Andy Cain** and his wife, well that's seven and was **Mrs. Carver**, and her daughter was nine, and **Tom Westbrooks**, and his wife was eleven, and let me see if I can think of the others. Did I say **Mrs. Cheek**?

**F.C.** No.

**L.B.** Well **Mrs. Cheek**, and I mentioned **Jim Windthrop**, that would make twelve, well they's two more.

**F.C.** Well maybe you'll think of them in a few minutes.

**F.C.** Did ya'll have Sunday School in those days?

**L.B.** Well they didn't have Sunday School until after they organized the church. Then sometimes we'd go to Union Springs, my father was a Baptist.

**F.C.** A Methodist, you mean?

**L.B.** No! He was a Baptist and he wouldn't believe in the Methodist way of doing it, he didn't much want to talk, but he'd let us go sometime. He come from Burning Bush, he belonged at Burning Bush. He'd take us over there, but it was so fur to take us, you know, to Sunday School. After they organized the church, then they was having Sunday School.

**F.C.** How often would you have church, a month?

**L.B.** Well, they, we'd have it once a month. For a long time, we'd have church once a month.

**F.C.** When did they move the church down to where the church is setting now?

**L.B.** Well, I don't remember, it was when the government took the land though, you see, the government took the land, and they give 'em the church, and they just moved it and put it back down there, but I don't remember what year it was.

**F.C.** I imagine there was some pretty hard times back then?

**L.B.** Why yes, and then they wasn't so many members, it started with fourteen, that's what it started with. I've thought about it a lot of times about fourteen members, and then after the government took the land why that moved out, you see, a lot of them, they went back down again, and so my father was dead, then, and my husband (**John Thomas Brown**) was put in deacon, and he was a deacon.

**F.C.** He's probably the first deacon wasn't he? Your father was, your father did?

**L.B.** Yes, he come in there deacon, he come in, yeah, and then John was put in, my husband was a deacon, so ah, he died then but, we keep going, I keep, I went with the children, and they didn't have no pastor then, after we got down there where we didn't have no pastor, might not get one. Sunday we was coming on home, I said to **John Huff** that's, actually he's my brother-in-law, and I said to him what the reason they don't call a preacher. He said, ah, we can't call no preacher cause we ain't got no deacon. They all died out. So the next Saturday night I went down home to my father's and when I got down there, preacher **Fuller** I believe you've heard of him.....

**F.C.** Yes.

**L.B.** An' so, he happened to be there and I told him about it and he told me, you go on back, and you tell em to call em a preacher and elect em some deacons and go on. So I come on back and told **John Huff** what he said and then they went ahead and put in **Jess Proctor** and **Clyde**, I think, as deacons then.

**F.C.** That's probably where I got that a few minutes ago about the church, you know, disbanding, it didn't disband. They just got out of a pastor; out of deacons that was the way it was.

**L.B.** Yes, yes.

**F.C.** Then it started growing.

**L.B.** They still had Sunday School though. Yes, it started growing and that's what it grown from. You see that when it started, it started with fourteen members, well it got back down till it didn't have many. Then cause the government moved a lot of them out, and so, so, some of em had died. So they's one feller and his sister didn't attend any more, so it started then and been a climbing ever since.

**F.C.** Well, what about preacher **Gray**, do you remember him?

**L.B.** I remember him, but I remember all of 'em, I just can't.

**F.C.** What about preacher **Ellington**?

**L.B.** Yes, I can remember **Ellington** better than any of em, cause he's the one, they's several of the hardest hearted boys around here professed religion when he preached here.

**F.C.** Can you think of any of them was saved when he was here?

**L.B.** Yes, they was the Ivy boy, and, ah let me see if I can figure the other, and **Elmond (Elmond Devoe Brown)**, that boy of mine, ah he had a change, but he didn't tell anybody he has, and I've tried to get him to join the church, but he won't do it, that one that's mine, but he's told **Edwin (Clarence Edwin Brown)**. Edwin told me here not long ago that he'd talked to him about it, you know, and he told him the same thing he told me, and I told Edwin I was glad he talked to him, if he told somebody else about it, and he said he never did feel like going up no more.

**F.C.** A **Kingston**, Preacher **Kingston**.

**L.B.** Yes **Kingston**, he preached, he's along down towards last.

**F.C.** That was in 1912.

**L.B.** 12, Well **Lula (Lula Christia Dunn)** put 'em down best she can remember, but **Kingston**, she went to school with him, but he made a right good preacher. He's kinda slow you know, and he didn't preach much, but after he become a deacon, he got pretty good.

**F.C.** Well, what about **Ben Brooks**?

**L.B.** Well, **Brooks** was a good preacher, I remember him.

**F.C.** **Ludlow**?

**L.B.** **Ludlow**, yea I remember Ludlow.

**F.C.** Preacher **Hunt**?

**L.B.** Yeah, Hunt, but I might near forgot Hunt. That's the only one, though.

**F.C.** Preacher **Newton**?

**L.B.** Well, **Newton** he come from Rossville. Yeah and he preached out there, seem to me like he preached one time then they called him back, they was two of the Newtons.

**F.C.** Well **Charlie Dunn**?

**L.B.** (Chuckle) I remember Him.

**F.C.** You do? (Laughing) Was he converted at Cloud Springs?

**L.B.** No Sir, he professed that his folks was all Calvinists and he professed religion at a tent meeting, they had a tent meeting, he come from up in Hendersonville, and professed religion up there, and ah, so he boarded our house, he got to coming, he picked a guitar, he got to coming out there with Elmond and the children, and so he commence after a while going with Lula, well I found out he was just honest, I could tell by they way he wrote and everything, and, ah, he was a good honest boy, and things, and so they, he kept coming out there, so then a, after he, I told the children he told me about professing at that meeting, I told the kids, I said, just let him alone, don't say nothing, so he got to boarding there then stayed on, after a little while he joined the church up here, and then he's got another brother that moved down here, he joined the Baptist church and he preaches too.

**F.B.** Now preacher **Ludlow**, he come back then after brother Charlie left?

**L.B.** Yeah, Yeah, he come back.

**F.C.** Then Preacher **Reichle**?

**L.B.** Yes, I remember **Reichle** alright.

**F.C.** Then Preacher **Mavity**?

**L.B.** Yeah.

**F.C.** And **Cargill**?

**L.B.** Yes **Cargill**, he was a kinda of an old man, **Cargill** was.

**F.C.** Preacher **Blassingame**, ain't that his name?

**L.B.** Yeah, **Blassingame**.

**F.C.** Well he's dead.

**L.B.** Yeah.

**F.C.** Died last year I believe. Well then, there was brother **Guy Rainwater**?

**L.B.** Yeah.

**F.C.** And then Brother **Lumpkin**, and then me? (**Frank Creighton**)

**L.B.** Yeah, I reckon she's got em down pretty good.

**F.C.** I'd like to ask you something else now, about the old church, you know that burnt down, is that, I imagine that was a shock to all of you, wasn't it?

**L.B.** Well item was they didn't know how come it to get burnt, you know, it got burnt one night, didn't know whether some of em left fire or something, or what caused it to get burnt.

**F.C.** Then the new church started then?

**L.B.** Yeah, they started it.

**F.C.** I know, I was looking at the record. We have over six hundred members now, I believe?

**L.B.** Yeah

**F.C.** Then started off in 1884, started off with fourteen?

**L.B.** Fourteen members.

**F.C.** I imagine that it makes your heart rejoice?

**L.B.** Why, yes that was.

**F.C.** What your dad and husband and all them, they had it hard, and all these other preachers, and now today seeing all, seeing one of your boys.

**L.B.** I think about it lot of times, I got it in my head, I believe the Lord blesses people that tries to serve, why yes, and course my daddy was strict, they was eight, eleven children of us but, real strict, he didn't let us carry on.

**F.C.** Well I know that maybe after all the heartaches you had, and all that, and hard times maybe that you had back there, getting the church started, now when you see two of ya boys singing and then one of them a deacon, and the other a preacher (**Clyde Brown**), and then one nephew as a deacon.

**L.B.** Well, I think about it a lot of times, the Bible says “a promise is not to the owner its down, its across and down the third and fourth generation of them that serve” and of course nearly all the grandchildren, now Thomas’s (**Thomas Lydia Brown**), I think they all professed, but there’s one of ‘em didn’t join the church, but might near all the grandchildren belongs to the church.

**F.C.** Well, sister **Brown**, I know this, that whenever that you’re not there I always miss ya because, I just know that you’ve been a blessing to this church, and the community, and you’re a blessing to me.

**L.B.** Well, its been this way about me, I always went, my husband went as long as what time he lived, and afterwards I just went right on with the children, and I studied about it a lot of times. I think about people that’s got boys that grew up, and things like that. I said, I can go to bed and I don’t have to worry a bit about them out a drink or nothing like that, and another thing is when children little that’s when to put things in their head. Yes it is, cause that stays there. I know by myself, I can go back when I was, when to school in the little old schoolhouse, and that’s just as fresh in my mind as anything, now I forget things.

**F.C.** Well, let’s see, how old did you say you was?

**L.B.** I’m eighty six. Eighty-seven the last day of this coming July.

**F.C.** You remember anything about the Civil War?

**L.B.** No.

**F.C.** That’s before your time.

**L.B.** Yeah. All I remember about is was hearing my mother (**Amanda L.E. Kelley**) tell about it, she could tell a whole bunch.

**F.C.** They say they had a tough time.

**L.B.** Law yes, they, she told about it lotta times, they’s sixty living children ordered off on Sunday morning when they had the battle right there in front of, I told you, where we lived, and they lived on that side of the road then, and they come ordered them off, and they’d done formed they line of battle, and so they went a little over in towards Mission Ridge. She said they was sixty living children, and one or two old men went over there, and now men loaded up an

come over there in the field over there where the Snodgrasses where, she said she was worser scared then.

**F.C.** Course, ya'll didn't have electric lights when the church was built.

**L.B.** No.

**F.C.** What did they use?

**L.B.** Just had lamps. Lamps? Yeah.

**F.C.** What did you use candles?

**L.B.** Yes, I think they did at first. Yes, they used to have candles.

**F.C.** I know they used to tell us about our old church at down home, they used torches.

**L.B.** Yeah.

**F.C.** Torches while they had service at night.

**L.B.** They used to use candles, and then they got to having lamps.

**F.C.** I imagine they had some good old shouting meetings back then?

**L.B.** Oh yes, I reckon they did, the people was afraid to shout.

**F.C.** You reckon maybe they don't have much to shout about? Maybe that's it.

**L.B.** May be, I don't know, but law, I would be up there in the church study at the old place, I can just remember it as well, they was one night the preacher come out there and preaching, teaching how he lifted up his eyes being in torment, on that, and the house was just packed, they was just standing up across the back, and I know I had, my sister that's dead, she shouted that night, and I got up and said "Lord have mercy on this congregation" at the top of my, hands in a fist.

**F.C.** Could you tell us where you was at when you was saved?

**L.B.** Yes, I was there in Cloud Springs old church.

**F.C.** That was the same place you was just telling us about?

**L.B.** Yes, and I kept going and going, and I got out of heart, and you'd get out of heart sometimes, and stay back, and so one day I got up, we was coming to school, they's have school there, we was coming to school, and I got up and

went down to the, went to the, mom was ironing, I went down, they was a branch down in the woods, I just stood there and got to studying about it, and this thought come down "what can I do? I'm afraid; I'll just be saved, and if I'm lost, I'll just be lost." Went on back to the house, and went to, and told my mother, I said I'm not a going up there narry another time, and she just left it with me to do as I pleased, you know, well I went on that day and old Brother **Loveless** preached, and well it just seemed to me like every word he said was right to me, so when they made the alter call I didn't wait a minute I got up, and took the front seat, and they was a neighbor girl come, and sit down by me, and over in her lap I went, and they got down and went to praying and all at once just everything left me, and I never saw a brighter day, or people look, I didn't make no big to-do over it or nothing, but it was just so bright and everybody looked just good.

**F.C.** What time would ya'll have meeting at night in those days?

**L.B.** Well, about eight o'clock I think.

**F.C.** About dark?

**L.B.** Yeah.

**F.C.** That would be about nine our time now.

**L.B.** Yes, I guess it would.

**F.C.** We're on this fast time, you know. Well what time would you generally get home of the morning then?

**L.B.** Which a, at night?

**F.C.** At night?

**L.B.** Well, sometimes it would be pretty late getting back.

**F.C.** Twelve or one o'clock, something like that?

**L.B.** I don't know if we ever stayed that late, but we'd be eleven or twelve getting back.

**F.C.** Well, what about day services, what was about the latest you ever got in after meeting?

**L.B.** Well, I don't hardly remember, sometimes they'd keep later than they did others, of course if they had penance or anything that way they might stayed later.

**F.C.** Well, I know that, They had some good times back in those days. I imagine you carried your children to church, and put them on pallets too, haven't you?

**L.B.** Yes, Clarence (**Clarence Brown**) and Clyde (**Clyde Brown**) lay on a pallet behind, you know how they made old fashion stands, I don't know whether you know or not, but I used to, the way we done we'd put a bed in the wagon and put a quilt on it and lay our kids in the wagon and then go to church and take em out, and I'd take my quilt, and make a pallet down. **Trotter's** preached a many time with them laying back there a sleep.

**F.C.** Go ahead.

**L.B.** I was just gonna say take 'em up to home, we had, my husband had to go, but he'd help me take 'em out, and he took 'em and laid 'em in the wagon many night, and take 'em home and put 'em to bed, they'd never wake up.

**F.C.** I imagine they'd be lots of them laying around on the floor though wouldn't they?

**L.B.** Why yeah, they'd go to sleep and on benches.

**F.C.** People get to shouting and I never seen 'em step on one of them yet. Have you?

**L.B.** No.

**F.C.** I imagine, if you could, you'd probably live those day over again, wouldn't you?

**L.B.** Well, I wouldn't regret it.

**F.C.** Un huh.

**L.B.** But, I tell 'em I'm satisfied, and of course about my kids, I don't have to worry about them. I know they're alright, and course Edgar (**Edgar Brown**) had a spasm when he was little, and that kinda eat at him a little. He never could learn at school, and then he was full of mischief too.

**F.C.** He's still full of mischief ain't he?

**L.B.** Why yeah, like that red-headed man's woman, she asked me up there one day, I hadn't went, but about two or three times after she come up, and she slipped up and asked me, something about kids, or something that away. I told her , I said, I had seven boys, I'd raised seven boys and two girls, and she said, "well, how do you raise 'em?" I said "well, my daddy raised me with a principle in me and I tried to put it in mine too," and I said, "He used to come my house when

they's little an say, "now Laura, you'll have to put the switch on them boys even if you think you can raise 'em up yourself". She wanted to know if I'd done it, I told her, "yes, if they needed it."

**F.C.** Don't you think Clarence might of done a little bit better if you'd a whooped him a little bit more?

**L.B.** He might, I didn't grow up to mischief, it's just him, yes, he was, when they was little, they was just as full of mischief as they could be. It's a wonder, I've thought about it a lotta times about how they learned the Bible and things like that.

**F.C.** It's amazing, it really is.

**L.B.** Why yes! Why they was just as mischievous as they could be, and Clyde was hateful about the water, I used to go up the neighbor's house, and they's a branch along the road, and I'd be a toating him when he was a baby, and I'd try to get him to come home, and stood around an hour, and I said, "If I have to come back after you, I'll give you a whipping."

**F.C.** What, playing in the water?

**L.B.** Yes, stop at the branch and play.

**F.C.** He even had a little badness in him back then, didn't he?

This will prove a blessing to the people, when we play it back to them, and I appreciate you giving us this information, I really do, and it's been a blessing to me since I been at Cloud Springs. God has wonderfully blessed us, and I hope I get to stay here many more years, and I hope that you live to be a hundred years old, and I get to eat dinner with you on that day, I really do.

**L.B.** What they'll say down there sometimes about being a hundred years, I told em I wasn't scared about living till I was a hundred years old.

**F.C.** Well, Thank you very much.

This is Brother Creighton (**Frank Creighton**), speaking again, This tape you just heard was made in nineteen hundred and fifty three, and Aunt **Laura Brown** was of course eighty six years of age, and oh, what a memory she has, and what a sweet person she was. What a blessing she was, and then the children that she spoke of, spoke of there, and also the ah, her son-in-law, which was Brother

**Charlie Dunn**, a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. All of those that she mentioned there of her children and her son-in-law, they have gone to be with the Lord, and I appreciate Sister Brown I appreciate those, Aunt **Sally Brown**, Mrs. **Velma Brown** that's still living, God blesses their hearts, such a blessing to us, but also I'd like to say that, I stayed at Cloud Springs four years, from fifty one to fifty five, and then I was gone nine years but to bring you up to date the preachers up to this and so since then, when I left Cloud Springs in fifty five, they called Brother **Roy Arwood** as pastor, and then Brother **Arwood** left they called Brother **Leroy Perry** as pastor. After Brother **Perry** left they called Brother **Burmann Cape** as pastor, and after **Burmann** left they called Brother **Ed Kelley** and he stayed until nineteen and sixty four whenever they called me back. After nine years, after I was at New Liberty six years, at Green Street in Dalton for three years, they called me back to Cloud Springs in nineteen sixty four, at which I stayed until nineteen eighty. December nineteen eighty we resigned as pastor at Cloud Springs after sixteen years. Twenty glorious years as pastor of the Cloud Springs Baptist Church. Then they called Brother **Woody Lee** who is pastor there now. On the fourth Sunday in June they will have, they will be observing the one hundredth birthday of Cloud Springs Baptist Church.