

TUG RIVER CONFERENCE OF FREE WILL BAPTIST

Although we are without any written records of the early years of the Tug River Conference. Tug River itself is largely responsible for this with damaging floods.

I had records of the minutes of the organizational meeting, held at the Glen Hayes Church in 1924. My Grandfather Floyd Hatfield was the first clerk and I believe that Brother C.S. Penninton of the Sprigg church was the Moderator.

The Churches were, and still are in the watershed of the Tug River within West Virginia and Kentucky. Some of the churches were I believe a church at Kenova, Glen Hayes, Sprigg, mabe Mate Creek, and Paw Paw Kentucky, and although Kermit had no permanent building, there was a Free Will Baptist movement in town. My mother, Ruth Hatfield Burchett told me that she came to Kermit about 1921 with her father and Oastor, Charlie S. Penninton of the Sgrigg Church to help with the effort for the church in Kermit.

There was a picture of an man with a long bread, they called him Daddy Thomas, from Kanawha County, and that was a Free Will Baptist organization. The older folks told me a story of him traveling through Glen Hayes in the train stopped to take on water, he looked out the window and saw an empty house in a small community and felt lead to get it and start a revival. He had no money, but found the owner of the house and asked about renting the house for a revival. He was told, No one around here goes to church. He said, this is a good place to start one. He told the owner that he would take up a collection, and pay the rent.

The first night only the couple that owned the house came. The next night a few more came, and then several people were saved. A collection was taken to pay the rent. The owners had been saved and refused to take the money.

A Church had been founded and later the Tug River Conference was founded here.

Many stories have been told about Dodge Coleman from the Paw Paw Kentucky Church. How that the area was a pretty tough place, and how he would carry a gun to church, to keep order around the church, after all, the Tug River Valley has a history of Mine Wars, and the Hatfield and McCoy

Feud, bring about the name Bloody Mingo. But at the same time it was home to a lot of good churches and people.

***NOTE:** This information was given to the Historical Committee of the West Virginia State Association of Free Will Baptist, in December, 2016, by ?????????? No Name????*
