

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Bostick Family, Missions

First Baptist Church (Shelby, NC)

10-30-1994

October 30, 1994 - Bostic Family The Shelby Star

Van Hoyle

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/baptist-historical-collections-bostick-family-missions>

Called to minister, the Bostic family sent three to China

There is something that sparks an entire family to take up the same occupation, to live the same type of life. Just what that spark is may never be fully known.

Often, the spark gives birth to "military families."

For instance, not only were the sons of Gen.

Robert E. Lee in the military, but so was his father, who was known as Light Horse Harry Lee.

Also, Gen. George Patton's father and grandfather were soldiers, as is his son.

But not all such families are military families, but, as one old Baptist preacher said, there are families "in the Army of the Lord." That preacher was talking about the Bostic family and that family's great sacrifice in the mission fields of China.

Just where the Bostic family originated is uncertain to me. But in 1850 at age 45, John Bostic and his wife, Cynthia Merrill Bostic, were living near the Second Broad River. They, along with their children, Samuel, George, Richard, John, Priscilla, Susanna and Temperance, lived in the section of Rutherford County that today bears their name.

Their oldest son, Samuel, married Jane Suttle, and for a time, they lived in the area of his birth. Sometime later, he and his family moved to Shelby and lived in a home on South Lafayette Street where the railroad crosses the street. Sa-

rice the officials were giving away. He froze to death that night, his ticket was taken from him and his coat pulled off and stolen. Yesterday, his wife and little child came hunting for him and the last that was known of them they were sitting beside a newly made grave, in the pauper field, weeping and shivering from cold and hunger.

"On last Sunday, there were hundreds who came to our yard, expecting that we were going to give away rice that day. We asked them in and Mr. Herring preached to a large crowd of men and the Christian women and I talked some to the women, but I found it hard to do much talking to such hungry people. Many of them already show hungry in their faces. Several asked me if I would not take their children and said they were not able to keep them longer and could find no one who wanted them.

"Brother Wade has 100 hands hired at 100 cash per day and working on the public roads around the city and 100 filling up a big gulley in our back yard. He uses money given by the famine relief committee for the former and for the latter he uses what has been sent to him individually to help the poor. We hope to keep these 200 hands employed till wheat harvest, if possible and we are hoping more help will be sent directly to us and that the Shanghai committee will be able to send us another appropriation soon.

"Mr. Herring got here Sunday night, the fifteenth and Mr. Ford of the C.I.M got here last Saturday night. They have been much help in getting a plan inaugurated by which to distribute



**Van
Hoyle**

muell and his family attended Zoar Church, where he was a charter member and deacon. At Zoar Church, a spark was set in the Bostic family that burned brightly all around the world.

Samuel and Jane's children were Joseph, John, Benjamin, William, George, Sara, Cynthia, Samuel Jr., Thomas, Mary, Lenorah, Plato, Orlando, Wade and Attie. Among those 15 children, the spark struck hardest in George (known as G.P.), Wade and Attie. George became a Baptist minister, and in 1889, he felt the call to the big country of China. It was there he lived for 37 years until his death on June 22, 1926, in the Anhwei Province. His brother Wade went to China in 1909, where he lived for 31 years. He came home only when Japan began taking over parts of the Chinese mainland.

The youngest child of Samuel and Jane Suttle Bostic was Attie Texas Bostic. She was born Sept. 9, 1875. In 1900 at the age when most women were marrying and having children, Attie Bostic followed the footsteps of her brother, G.P., deciding to devote her life to the mission field in China. She was there when her brother contracted typhoid fever. She and her sister-in-law did all they could to nurse G.P. back to health, but death came. He was buried in a plot of land he had purchased some years before. He was the first foreigner to be buried in that province of China.

In the March 24, 1911, issue of the Cleveland Star a letter penned by Attie Bostic was reproduced. The letter was dated Jan. 24, 1911, Pochow, Anhwei, China. It told of the horrors she encountered in that land.

"Dear Friends —

Only those who are here and witness the suffering arising from this famine that is now upon China, cannot at all realize the awfulness of the suffering. Last week I heard of the death of four grown people within four days, on the streets near us. Yesterday, there came such a sad story to my ears. A man had come in from the country, the day before, with a ticket to get some of the

the funds that have been sent from Shanghai. The official himself went into the country with them yesterday and gave them a send off in giving out the tickets. They went into the homes and examined and they say in most homes they found absolutely nothing, and many of them were showing the pangs of hunger. In one home of nine, they found seven sick, in another home they found the dead not yet buried. They estimated that they distributed to a 1,000 persons yesterday, but there are at least 20,000 who need help. They have two more parties today and hope to reach more people than they did yesterday."

The letter from Attie Bostic continues along the same theme. The people of China were dying from hunger and cold. They realized there was an enormous task before them and they could have easily given up and came home. However, the Bostics remained in China.

As I stated before, Attie's brother, Wade, came back to America in 1940. Attie remained and was taken prisoner by the Army of Japan in 1941. She remained in a Japanese prison camp in China until 1943 when, at age 68, she gained passage upon the ship "Gripsholm" bound for America.

The trip itself took 75 days and covered almost 22,000 miles to avoid the world at war. She returned to Shelby, and in 1947, she married T.J. League who had also been a missionary to China. Her husband died in January 1954. Later that year her niece, Bertha May Bostic, moved into Attie's home, and there the two remained until 1963.

On May 7, 1965, at age 89, Attie Bostic died. According to her wishes, she was buried in her Chinese ceremonial robe and with her Bible clutched in both hands near her heart.

She holds the distinction of being the first female missionary from Shelby and Cleveland County. Those who would follow after her would be continuing the spark set in Attie Bostic back in 1900.

(Van Hoyle writes this column for the Star each Sunday.)