



ROBERT COOKE BUCKNER

Robert Cooke "Father" Buckner was born January 3, 1833 in Madisonville, Tennessee to Rev. Daniel Buckner and Mary Polly Hampton Buckner. He was the youngest son and the fifth of six children. His oldest brother, H. F. Buckner (1818-1882) was also born in Tennessee and served as a career missionary to the Creek tribe in Oklahoma and founded the Murrow Orphan's Home.

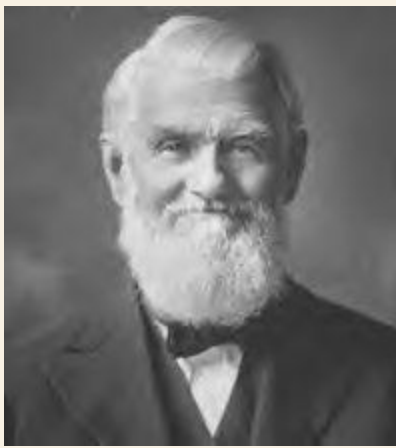
R. C. Buckner attended seminary in Tennessee and college in Kentucky. He was ordained as a Baptist minister at the age of 17. He served as a pastor of several Kentucky churches before marrying Vienna Phillips Long in the summer of 1854. A nephew, Adoniram Judson Holt served as a missionary to the Seminole tribe in the Indian territory and then was a minister for the rest of his career. Other descendants in the ministry included R. C. and Vienna Buckner's son, Henry Friedland "Hal" Buckner, missionary in Canton, China; great-grandson, R. E. Beddoe, medical missionary and builder of the S. P. Ramseur hospital at Yingtak, China.

While serving as a pastor of First Baptist Church in Paris, Texas, R. C. Buckner created a religious newspaper called the Religious Messenger which later became the Texas Baptist and owned the publication until 1883. In 1876 Buckner relocated to Dallas where his focus was creating and establishing an orphan's home under the auspices of Texas Baptists in 1879. This entity became the Buckner Orphan's Home. Buckner ran the organization until his death in 1919. He was succeeded by two generations of his descendants. This organization still exists today as Buckner International. Buckner himself spoke of his nickname "Father Buckner," saying that he did not recall when it began, but that it was connected to his service at the children's home.

Buckner appeared in the photo taken at the Saturday November 5, 1904 groundbreaking for a new hospital to be called Texas Baptist Memorial Sanitarium, later to be known as Baylor University Medical Center. Its charter had been granted by the State of Texas the previous October.

Around 1917, the staff of the orphan's home had the 1820s log cabin that he was born in disassembled and brought from Tennessee to Texas for Buckner's 80th birthday. It now sits on the grounds of the orphan's home behind the chapel. The orphan's home also once owned the cabin that now resides downtown and was once believed to be the cabin of John Neely Bryan. The latter was donated to Dallas County around 1935 for the Texas Centennial.

Mrs. Vienna Buckner passed away in 1917 and R. C. Buckner followed her in death in 1919. Both are interred at Grove Hill Cemetery in Dallas County, Texas.



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