

Baptist History Homepage

Henry Eugene Watters, D. D., M. A.

A Principal of the Hall-Moody Institute

A History of Tennessee and Tennesseans, 1913

The Hall Moody Institute at Martin in Weakley county, founded in 1900, has been under the executive direction of Dr. Watters since 1904, and has prospered in numbers of students and influence beyond almost any other Tennessee educational institution that might be named. Dr. Watters is one of the younger men in church and educational works, but has demonstrated exceptional ability in his chosen field.

Henry Eugene Watters was born on a farm in Graves county, Kentucky, in 1876, a son of Theodore M. Watters, who was born in Paducah, Kentucky, in 1853, and a grandson of John Watters, who was born in Yorkshire, England, and there reared and educated. John Watters when a youth served an apprenticeship in the trade of millwright, and at its completion came to the United States, locating in Kentucky, where he followed his trade for a number of years. On the breaking out of the war he entered the Confederate service, and after going south never returned and nothing is known of his end. He married Mary McReynolds, who was born in Graves county, Kentucky, of Scotch-Irish ancestry, she surviving her husband a few years.

Theodore M. Watters, the father, an only child, acquired a good education during his youth, and taught school a part of each year for several years. In the meantime, he bought a farm a few miles from Mayfield, where he now lives, engaged in general farming and stock raising. He married Josephine Ransom, who was born in that part of Ballard county, now Carlisle, Kentucky. Her parents were Matt and Elizabeth

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(Hall) Ransom. The Ransom family originally came from North Carolina, and the Halls from Virginia, of English descent. Theodore M. Watters and wife reared five children, namely: Henry E., Dorinda, Mollie, Eva and J. Matt.

Henry Eugene Watters was reared a farm boy, first attending the country schools. At the age of eighteen he was qualified to teach, and began the work in his native county, continuing there as a schoolmaster for several terms. He then entered the Southern Normal University at Huntington, Tennessee, where he was graduated in 1900. Subsequently he was a graduate student and instructor in the M. & S. W. Institute at Jackson, Tennessee, and was a graduate student at Brown University in 1906. In 1900 he became principal of the M. N. College at Palmersville, in Weakley county, where he remained for two years. He then became principal of the high school at Greenfield for one year. In 1904 he was called to take charge as principal of the Hall Moody Institute at Martin, and has occupied that position to the present time.

This school was founded in 1900 as a Baptist Institution. In 1904 eighty-seven pupils were enrolled, and since that time the school has flourished. From 1908 to 1913 the average attendance has been five hundred pupils. The faculty comprises seventeen teachers, and the facilities and system of instruction are such that Tennessee has few institutions of learning of higher grade and none with a better showing of results in Christian scholarship than the Hall Moody Institute.

In 1903 the S. N. College at Bowling Green, Kentucky, conferred upon Mr. Watters the degree of M. A., and in 1906 the Hall Institute gave him the degree of D. D. Dr. Watters was reared in the Baptist church, and was ordained a preacher of that denomination in Carlisle county, Kentucky, in 1900. He has served as pastor at McKenzie, Erin, Bradford, Dresden, Woodland and several country churches. He is now moderator of the Beulah Association.

In 1899 Dr. Watters married Miss Nettie Routon, who was born in Henry county, Tennessee, a daughter of John Routon. Mr. and Mrs. Watters have four children, named: Lillian, Everett and Evelyn, twins, and Marden. Dr. Watters is a member of the Tennessee State Baptist Educational Commission. He has had many years of experience as county and state instructor, having conducted the three largest state institutes ever held in Tennessee, those at Martin in 1911 and 1912, and at Milan in 1913.

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