

Assemblies of God HERITAGE™

THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD ARCHIVES

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The Great Ozark Mountains Revival

How the Holy Spirit Shook Thayer, Missouri in 1909

Harry E. Bowley

It was the first of June, 1909, when our party went to Thayer, Missouri, from St. Louis. I had expected to go to Kansas City, but the Lord stopped me at a faith home in St. Louis where "Mother" Barnes and "Mother" Moeise were in charge.

We came to know the needs of Thayer, through J.H. Duke, who was then the proprietor of the railroad hotel there. Two years previously he had had a glorious experience in conversion, and he had prayed earnestly for a great revival in his town. We spent a month in strong supplication before God, which lasted sometimes all night, and the revival was born in our hearts. From this prayer band God chose those who were to go to Thayer. "Mother" Barnes was our leader, and others who went were her daughter Imogene, "Mother" Flint, B. F. Lawrence, and myself.

Brother Duke opened his hotel to us. He was a man of strong faith and great vision, and longed to see souls saved.

Brother Duke had said to us, "Come to Thayer. I haven't any money to send you, but I have a hotel and rooms. I'll get the tent, have it put up and seated, and we'll have a meeting."

So we started tent meetings. But we met with bitter persecution. Thayer, in those days was notorious as a border town, being just across the

Editor's Note. During the summer of 1909 — 73 years ago — a remarkable revival stirred the small but tough mountain community of Thayer, Missouri. This account was written by Harry E. Bowley, one of the participants in the revival and pastor of the congregation organized. This article is abridged from Bowley's accounts published in the Pentecostal Evangel, June 12 and 19, 1948.

state line from Arkansas. Men who didn't want to face the law in Arkansas would come to Thayer. There were a lot of illicit saloons that kept the country in a turmoil all the time. These people didn't like the message preached in our "rag church," but they came to the meetings to find out what was going on.

The news traveled far — and people up and down the railroad, back in the hills and mountains, came in all kinds of trucks and wagons. When they found that God was healing the sick, they brought their loved ones on beds, sometimes driving all night to get to Thayer first so that we would pray for them.

Men were struck with dreadful conviction in the corn fields; on the railroad, as they rode in the caboose; and as they went about their business. Such was the moving of the Spirit of God, that shows which had been listed to give their performance at the theater, when they hit the town and saw that such a religious "performance" was on, cancelled their stay and left before the night. One day the mayor came to me and

said, "Now, Bowley, we're having a circus. We need this circus. I don't want you to pray this thing out of town. I don't want

Tough old Joe French was brought back from the dead. Hundreds were converted. Scores were healed and baptized in the Spirit.

you to interfere." I laughed and said, "Well, my Lord has it in hand." The circus came to town and put up its tents, but no one went to the shows; the people were all at our revival meeting.

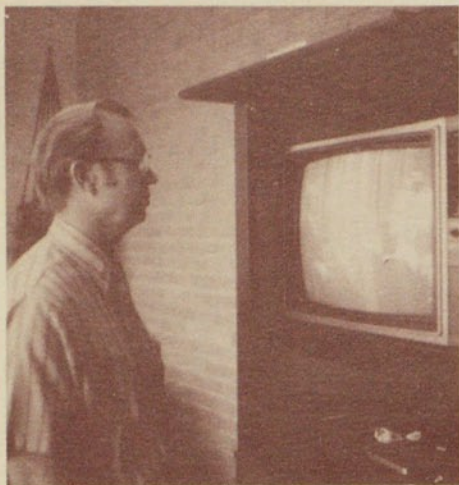
I remember when the Spirit fell in the tent. After two weeks and a half of dreadful pull, when it seemed nothing would move, suddenly one morning three sisters who were supposed to be Christians came to the altar. Each one was demon possessed. Each was delivered in the name of Jesus; and as the demons went out of them the power of God fell upon them, and they began to speak with other tongues and magnify the Lord. That was the break in the revival. From that time until the end of six weeks, 106 were converted and 54 received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

One night the power of God came upon the place, and the glory of the Lord was so great and so wonderful that suddenly we broke out speaking and singing in other tongues. All at once the congregation was amazed to hear that over the tent there was another chorus, the heavenly chorus, that had joined in with our singing. It brought such a sense of God's presence upon the town that the next night the tent was jammed to the doors. Everyone was asking what was

Thayer, Missouri, about 1909 (photo courtesy of The Thayer News)



(Continued on p. 3)



Missionary Phillip Sharp views a video interview Dr. Del Tarr conducted with E. S. Williams in 1980.

Archives Acquires Video Interviews

Your Help Is Needed In Project

Ever since the Archives was established in 1977 there has been an interest in collecting materials from individuals who have contributed to the origin and the development of the Assemblies of God.

One of the important methods being used to capture the stories significant to the organization is oral history. Many people in Springfield have been interviewed, and several people elsewhere have donated audio and video interviews.

These tapes are of interest to researchers and others who want to know more about our history.

The audio tape collection now has approximately 200 tapes, which includes interviews, sermons, and historically significant events. With recent acquisitions, the Archives now has the following video tapes available to researchers:

William Emmanuel	A. N. Trotter
Alice R. Flower	Arthur Berg
Elva Hoover	James Hamill
Maynard and Gladys Ketcham	Murray Brown, Sr.
Willie Millsaps	Bert Webb
Noel Perkin	Irene Pearlman
Frank Boyd	Esther Harvey
John Richards	Josephine Williams
Clarence Goudie	N. Cleo Tapp
Everett Phillips	John Burgess
Victor Plymire	Anna B. Stafsholt
C. M. Ward	Thomas F. Zimmerman
E. S. Williams	William Menzies

Regretably, many of our Pentecostal pioneers died before we had a chance to record their stories. Many others could be interviewed right now if the Archives could obtain the help of our readers.

How can you help capture these im-

THE HERITAGE LETTER Wayne Warner

One of my most rewarding assignments is to interview on tape our pioneer missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders.

This is not work. It is a distinct pleasure and an honor!

What can compare with sitting down with a dedicated person who has been used of the Lord in faraway places — or right here in the Ozarks! Right now I am thinking of Alice Ruth Melching because I just completed the second taped session with this missionary who has served in four countries — two of which are now closed to missionary activity — for a total of 44 years.

Ruth was called to China when she was only a child — and then after training at Central Bible College and pioneering in the Kentucky mountains, she went to China in 1934. Unable to return to China during World War II, Ruth went to Cuba, learned Spanish and served there until she was able to return to Manchuria after the war. But then the communists took over, so she was evacuated along with other missionaries in 1949. Ruth didn't give up. Shut out of the land of her calling two different times, she received appointment to Java and learned a third language. She later served in Taiwan.

It doesn't take long to detect Ruth's love for the millions in other lands. As she recounts God's many acts of mercy and marvelous miracles of grace, her voice quivers and her eyes moisten. She is grateful that God called her as a missionary. Those to whom she has ministered since 1934 are grateful to God that Ruth responded to that call.

Ruth Melching is only one of scores of dedicated missionaries who have served God through the Assemblies of God in various parts of the world.

Their contribution to the Kingdom and to the Assemblies of God is immeasurable, and we can do little justice to their stories on a thin piece of magnetic tape. This is part of our grand heritage, and we are called to preserve and make it available to this and coming generations.

Important stories on tape before they are lost forever?

Do you have video or audio taped services or interviews which you would like to donate to the Archives? Do you have access to recording equipment and would like to interview an Assemblies of God pioneer in your area? Would you like to contribute a tax-deductible gift to help finance this project?

Your help is extremely important if this project is to succeed. Please write to the Archives and let us know how you wish to help.

After you read the accompanying article on this page, I hope you will sit down and do your part to preserve this grand heritage.

★ ★ ★ ★

A good number of historical documents cross our desk during the month. One of these, the magazine *Bread of Life*, deserves special recognition.

For several months Editor Gordon P. Gardiner has been running a series of articles titled, "Out of Zion . . . Into All the World." Through extensive research and a keen sense of recapturing God's moving upon early Pentecostals who had their roots in Zion, Illinois, the editor is producing an invaluable series.

Who are some of the people who were associated with the Dowie movement or the later Pentecostal group at Zion? The list of people whose stories are appearing in the *Bread of Life* reads almost like a Pentecostal Who's Who: John G. Lake, F. A. Graves, F. F. Bosworth, J. Roswell and Alice Reynolds Flower, William H. Piper, Fred Vogler, Harry Bowley, Joseph Wannemacher, Cyrus B. Fockler, Fred Hornshuh, Sr., D. C. O. Opperman, Marie Brown, and many others.

This inspiring series eventually will be placed in book form.

Subscription information to *Bread of Life* is available by writing to the magazine at 457 Harman Street, Brooklyn, NY 11237.

★ ★ ★ ★

Since I am recommending materials and experiences that will give you a greater awareness of revivalism and evangelism of the past, I must mention the museum at the Billy Graham Center on the Wheaton College campus. It was my privilege last month to visit the archives, library, and museum housed in this beautiful new facility.

As you walk from the Rotunda of Witnesses to the Evangelism in America and into the other areas of this museum, you quickly realize this is no ordinary exhibit. Here you will see and hear how the good news of Christianity has reached humanity through the past 2,000 years.

If you live in the Chicago area or plan to visit there, don't fail to check this one out.

Until the next time, peace and God bless you.

Wayne E. Warner is
Director of the A/G
Archives



Thayer Revival

(Continued from p. 1)

going to happen next. Often the power of God would fall before we had the opportunity to preach.

One day we went to the tent and stayed there all day, not leaving until two or three o'clock in the morning. We didn't even leave for meals at noon. People all over the place were receiving the Baptism; others were getting saved; the sick were being healed, and demons were being cast out. When one person would get saved, he would go back and tell the news, and someone else would come running. We had no need of advertising. God took care of that. The place was crowded with folk who wanted to know the Lord.

There was a cook at the hotel, Joe French, who was a Catholic. No one seemed able to touch his life or to move him, except "Mother" Flint or me. He was one of the hardest men I have met.

We were praying at the tent, and God was moving mightily in the service, when suddenly the news came that Joe was

"The circus came to town and put up its tents, but no one went to the shows; the people were all at our revival meeting."

dying. It struck like a dagger to my heart. I had not talked to him about his soul as they had asked me to. I ran as fast as I could to the hotel, but when I got there Joe was not alive. I fell by the side of the bed and pled for mercy. I felt guilty because I had not led him to Christ before he died. They tried all kinds of things to see whether there was any life left in him. "Mother" Flint was a good nurse and she had been caring for him. But he was gone. Brother Lawrence and I went down to our room. When I opened the door, I fell to the floor and stayed there in agony of soul and spirit.



L. A. Sappington (standing) and John Tatum about 1913. Sappington was reared in Thayer and became a charter member of the A/G. He is now 88 and lives in Hanford, California.



Harry E. Bowley was one of five workers who moved into Thayer, Missouri, in the summer of 1909 for a tent meeting. (Photo courtesy of Alice Reynolds Flower.)

Three or four hours later there came a knock at the door. "Mother" Flint was there, saying, "Hallelujah! Joe's alive!" God can do things when people pray. That man lived to preach the gospel and give his testimony to many.

That is just one of the many wonderful things that happened in that revival. God laid his hands upon those who persecuted us. Many of them were suddenly cut off, and that without remedy. Some of them lay on their beds, rocking from one side to the other, screaming in terror; they cursed and asked for someone to come and pray for them saying, "I'm dying — I'm going to hell." A number of our tormenters were saved.

One night a group of men planned to kill me. They carried six-shooters and had a rope in their hands. But God impressed the saints to pray for my safe return. Six miles from Thayer they tried to seize me. I had a span of horses who knew how to run. I gave them the line and prayed, "Lord, help these horses to get home." Behind me I could hear my enemies coming on their horses, but mine won the race and we got safely home. When I returned one of our company called and asked, "Is Brother Bowley at home?" "Yes, he returned at such a time." He asked, "Did you know that six men had planned to hang him on a tree last night and riddle his body with bullets?" "Yes, but God undertook."

I've seen men crouched in fence corners ready to attack me when I came along, but when I passed by they were paralyzed and did not harm me. They were not able to move. God's hand was upon our lives in a wonderful way.¹

There was a backslidden missionary who had fallen into deep sin. He wandered into town and asked someone, "Have you a show where a person can go and have some fun?" "Yes, the biggest show in

town is up there at the 'rag meeting house.'" He came up. In the midst of the meeting one of our young people stood up and spoke in the most beautiful Spanish. This man had studied Spanish and understood it. She told him every sin in his life — what he was doing, the wives he was living with, how he had covered up his life — and called him to repentance. After it was over he stood up and said, "I planned to come and make fun. Here an innocent child comes to me with a message, telling me that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. If I'm going to be ready to meet Him I must get out of my sin and shame. What on earth do you have here? This girl has spoken in the pure Spanish language, telling me everything I've ever done wrong in my life."

That is the kind of thing that happened in the meetings in those days.

Calls came in from communities all around Thayer, saying, "Come over and help us. We're hungry for God. We want to be saved." As a result, new assemblies began to spring up.

A little farmer woman got saved; the call of God got hold of her heart, and she took the message. First thing I knew she had moved from Thayer and had gone a few miles out near a schoolhouse. She took her pigs, cows, and household goods (such as they were), got a little cabin, and went to work. In about three or four months a call came, "I have a prayer meeting, a Sunday school, and a church." We sent a couple of our girls over there, and when that mission was started and the power of God would fall, she would take up her pigs and cows, her household goods and her children, and she'd go a few miles farther into the mountains and open up another work.²

May God bring us back to such a life again. We never will have the revivals and the supernatural working of God in our churches until we press into that place where we will let God have His way regardless of the cost.³

¹During an especially dangerous 2-week period of the revival, a deputy sheriff — who had been converted in the meetings — became Bowley's personal body guard. The deputy told Bowley that God impressed him to stay with Bowley night and day because several men planned to kill him.

²The Sappington family in Thayer was touched by the revival but not their two teenage sons, Lloyd and John. They were well-known as fighters. But two years later they were converted and called to preach, both of them becoming charter members of the Assemblies of God. At the age of 88, Lloyd Sappington lives in Hanford, California, where he continues to minister in a nursing home.

³Harry Bowley became the pastor of the new congregation at Thayer and a church building was constructed. Part of the original building is still being used by the Assembly of God. Bowley later served in Africa as a missionary and pastored churches in the U.S. He died in 1953.

PRESERVING YOUR CHURCH HISTORY

Gaining Control of Accumulated Church Records

Pam Eastlake

Once your church or district has decided to establish an archival program and begins to accumulate materials, some method must be used to gain control of the records. An earlier article discussed the differences in methods used by librarians and archivists. While librarians follow either the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules or the Dewey Decimal System, archivists have no strict rules for cataloging their materials. However, there are broad guidelines that are used through-

Here's More Help

Duckett, Kenneth. *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual For Their Management, Care and Use*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1975.

Evans, Frank B. "Modern Methods of Arrangement of Archives in the United States." *American Archivist* 29 (1966): 241-263.

Evans, Frank B., and Harrison, Donald F. "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers." *American Archivist* 37, (1974): 415-433.

Gracy, David B., II. *Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977.

Holmes, Oliver W. "Archival Arrangement—Five Different Operations at Five Different Levels." *American Archivist* 27 (1964): 21-41.

Munden, Kenneth. "The Identification and Description of the Record Series." *American Archivist* 13 (1950): 213-227.

out the archival profession that will assist in establishing control of the records.

Archival collections are divided into record groups, subgroups, series, subseries, file units, and documents. The idea of the "record group" as a means of organization began in 1941 at the National Archives.¹

The *record group* consists of a body of records related by function, organization, or creator. For example, the records of the pastor could constitute a record group. Under this record group, subgroups might be established for correspondence, sermon

materials, committees, etc. Other record groups for church archives may include the youth pastor, music director, education director, and deacons. Not all record groups will contain subgroups.

Within the record group and/or subgroup the next body of records is the *series*. A series is defined as "documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from some activity, have a particular form, or because of some relationship arising out of their creation or use."² There may be several series in each record group. An example of a series of records is a correspondence file, or, in the case of a committee, a set of minutes. It is possible to further divide the series into subseries: correspondence may be filed under incoming and outgoing letters, each of these areas would be a subseries.

Series and subseries consist of *file units* and *documents*. File units are a collection

of documents maintained in a predetermined physical arrangement.³ In a correspondence series the file units consist of all the letters to an individual or organization. Documents are the individual items in the file, whether one page or several pages.

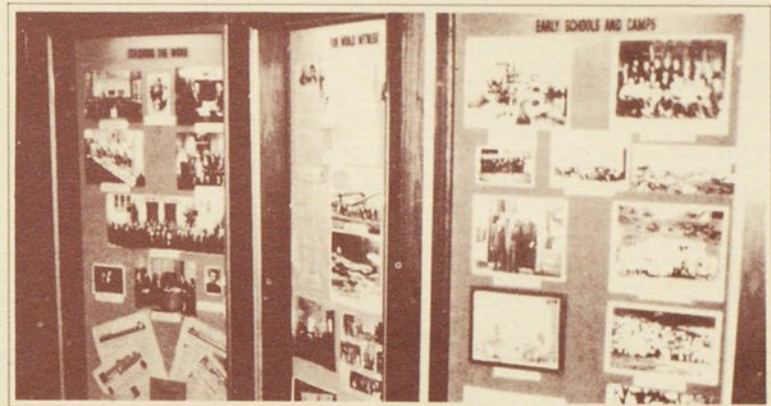
Due to the limited amount of space, it is difficult to go into great detail concerning arrangement of archival materials. The accompanying list has several books, manuals, and articles which further explain the basic principles of archival arrangement and organization.

¹David B. Gracy, II, *Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977), p. 5.

²Frank B. Evans and Donald F. Harrison, "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers," *American Archivist* 37 (1974): 430.

³*Ibid.*, p. 422.

Pam Eastlake is Archives Assistant, A/G Archives



Do you have something that belongs in the Assemblies of God Archives?

If you have collected Pentecostal magazines, books, films, recordings, photographs, correspondence, or other historical materials, the Archives needs to hear from you. The material you have access to might be just what we need to complete one of our several collections. And you can be assured the donated materials will be preserved so they can help tell the story of the Assemblies of God.

Please write today, giving information on materials you have to donate or lend to the Archives.



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ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HERITAGE

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Wayne E. Warner, Editor
Pam Eastlake, Assistant Editor

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TIME FRAME

A QUICK LOOK INTO THE PAST

News stories taken from the pages of the *Pentecostal Evangel* and other publications.

10 Years Ago — 1972

Westside Assembly, Davenport, Iowa, has grown from 78 to 1,384 in 10 months. Pastor Tommy Barnett says, "The congregation is obsessed with winning souls."

The International Distribution Center at the Assemblies of God Headquarters was dedicated in May. Also in Springfield, a ground-breaking service was conducted for the Maranatha Village retirement home.

20 Years Ago — 1962

Dick Fulmer, National Christ's Ambassadors Secretary, has resigned to become a missionary to Europe with primary ministry to U.S. servicemen.

A new Teen Challenge Center is now operating in Chicago at 315 Ashland Ave.

30 Years Ago — 1952

Central Bible Institute graduated 180 students in May. G. Raymond Carlson, district superintendent of the Minnesota District, preached the baccalaureate sermon. Class speakers were William Menzies and James Brown.

A good representation of U.S. Pentecostals attended the World Pentecostal Conference held in London, June 27 to July 5.

40 Years Ago — 1942

Many pastors and Christian workers are

ministering among servicemen. Thousands of copies of *Reveille*, the Assemblies of God military magazine, are being distributed each month. One of the more visible military ministries belongs to Evangelist Raymond T. Richey with his patriotic red, white, and blue gospel tent which he sets up near military bases.

Missionary Fred Burke has opened a new work in Nyasaland (Malawi) and welcomed more than 600 believers into the Assemblies of God.

50 Years Ago — 1932

T. B. Barrett reports from Oslo, Norway, that Smith Wigglesworth and his daughter are stirring Sweden and Norway with their powerful evangelistic meetings.

The Foreign Missions Department received a telegram from the U.S. Secretary of State confirming the report that missionary William E. Simpson was killed by bandits in China. He was the son of W. W. Simpson, also a missionary to China.

60 Years Ago — 1922

Pandita Ramabai, who founded a home for widows and orphans at Mukti, India, died April 5. A great Pentecostal revival at Mukti in 1905 received international attention.

A new Spanish hymnal compiled by H. C. Ball, *Hymnos de Gloria*, is finding excellent reception among Spanish-speaking people.



30 Years Ago — 1952

General Superintendent Wesley R. Steelberg's funeral was conducted July 16 at Central Bible College. In this photo are (left to right) J. Otis Harrell, W. I. Evans, Fred Vogler, Emil A. Balliet, E. S. Williams, Gayle Lewis, Ralph Riggs, Bartlett Peterson, and Wilfred A. Brown.

THE APOSTOLIC FAITH

Pentecost Has Come

Los Angeles Being Visited by a Revival of Bible Salvation and Pentecost as Recorded in the Book of Acts

Azusa Mission Paper Available

This is a reprint of the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* which was edited by William J. Seymour and published by the Azusa Street Mission. This issue is dated September 1906. A reprint of the first 13 issues of this paper is now available. Order may be placed with Gospel Publishing House, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802; order number 03-1915, \$7.95.

ARCHIVES ACTIVITIES

Recent Acquisitions

Typewriter formerly owned by J. W. Welch, donated by Alice Reynolds Flower.

Books and tapes donated by Christ for the Nations, Inc., Dallas, Texas.

William Branham's taped sermons, donated by Branham family.

Tapes, correspondence, books, photographs, donated by Homer Brooks. Includes copy of *Zion's Victory Songs*, published by the old Georgia-South Carolina District.

Photographs of John Lake, F. F. Bosworth, William Seymour, and others, donated by Gertrude Lake Reidt.

Thesis, "Pentecostal Pacifism: The Origin, Development and Rejection of Pacific Belief Among Pentecostals," donated by Jay Beamon.

Full Gospel Missionary Herald, bound in two volumes (1921-27), a publication of Bethel Pentecostal Assembly and Bethel Bible School, Newark, N.J. Donated by Vernon D. Pettenger.

Oral history interviews with Alice Ruth Melching, Alice Reynolds Flower, and E. L. Wright.

Microfilmed records of the Indiana District.

Finder Services Added

Catalog cards are being prepared for Archives photo collection.

New Equipment Purchases

The Archives recently took delivery on a Marantz 220 cassette recorder, microphones, and stand. This equipment is being used for oral history interviews.

OUR HERITAGE IN PHOTOGRAPHS



This 1954 photo shows Revivaltime speaker C. M. Ward pointing to the list of 300 radio stations which carried the program at that time.



A record-breaking crowd attended the morning worship service at the Juneau, Alaska, Assembly of God during the 1952 Alaska Biennial Council.



General Superintendent Ralph Riggs (left) discusses new church construction with Gayle Lewis and Victor Trimmer (1954).



Missionaries preparing to return to China in 1945 after World War II (each row identified left to right). **First row:** Harold Hansen, Harvey Wagner, Noel Perkin (FMD Director), Howard Osgood (Field Secretary), Ethel Perdue, Bea Hilderbrand, Palma Ransborg, and Rhoda Vigna. **Second row:** Thelma Hilderbrand, Rena Baldwin, Martha Simpson, Mary Lewer, Edith Osgood (Mrs. Howard), Helen Gustavson, Pauline Dunn, Elizabeth Galley, Irene Larson, and Virginia Hogan. **Third row:** Ruth Melching, Helen Kellstrom, Edna Ahlberg, Arthur Ahlberg, B. T. Bard, Lula Bell Hough, Sarah Johnston, Mildred Tangen, Henrietta Tielman, and Ruth Plymire. **Fourth row:** James Vigna, Robert Tangen, Glenn Dunn, J. Philip Hogan, James Baker, John Perdue, Harland Park, and Victor Plymire.