

Presbyterian Minister Rev. Edward Eells and Family

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With special thanks to Nancy Wilson LOOSECHIPS@aol.com for helping to identify the unusual Eells surname and for information about Edward Eells's ministry in the area of Keachie, Louisiana.

Where they lived

The family traveled extensively. Here are known residences of Edward Eells (1819-aft 1880) based on censuses and birthplaces of children. His son Edward and grandson Ernest (or Earnest) were also preachers.

1849	Kentucky (where son William was born)
1850-1851	Galloway Twp., Atlantic Co., NJ (census and where daughter Minnie was born)
1853	Kentucky (where daughter Annie was born)
1856	Choctaw Nation (where son Charles was born)
1859-1866:	Keachie, De Soto Parish, Louisiana. He started ministry in "Keatchie Group" of churches in 1859 and departed in 1866 after the Civil War. His daughter Minnie wrote an account of their time in Keachi (http://freepages.history.rootsweb.com/~garyscottcollins/Minnie-Eells-Keachie.pdf).
1870-1880	Jefferson, Kanawha Co., West Virginia (censuses)
1890-91	Washington, DC; listings for Rev. Edward Eells and Rev. Edward Eells, Jr. in City Directory

Reverend Eells's Ministry in and around Keachie, Louisiana

DeSoto Parish History - DeSoto Historical and Genealogical Society, c. 1995. *(transcribed by Nancy Wilson)*

From the entry for Keachi Presbyterian Church:

"About 1848, the Bethel Presbyterian Church was organized by the Red River Presbytery in a log schoolhouse, located approximately 15 miles south of Shreveport. This congregation erected a frame church in 1848-49. It is worthy to note that this was the first frame house of worship erected west of the Mississippi River. In 1856, this building was sold and the church moved to its present site, the erection of the present building completed in 1858, under the ministry of Rev. B. F. Peters. In 1859, the Presbytery changed the name to the **Keachi Presbyterian Church**.

Rev. E. Eells arrived in Keachi in January, 1859, and found the following members: Messrs. Alfred Simpson, T. P. Hall, Robert Jones, and Augustus Conway acting Ruling Elders, and Mrs. Susan Styles; Mrs. Virginia Pugh, daughter of Mr. Simpson; Mrs. Mary Jones, wife of Robert Jones; Mrs. Conway, mother of A. Conway and his wife Susan Conway; Charles F. Harris and wife, Mrs. Amanda Harris; Mrs. Nancy Gamble and daughter; Mrs. Jane McMichael, Mrs. Amanda Mason; Dr. Willis, a singing master and daughter Mrs. Laura Willis; Mr. Bettie Eatman and wife; Mrs. Henry Story and wife, and Mrs. Dempsey Eatman.

Among the charter members in Keachi was Mrs. Nancy Bones Gamble, whose husband originally purchased "from the general-government the land on which the town of Mansfield now stands, and perhaps it was at the instigation of his wife that he presented five lots to build churches on in that place to five denominations, the Presbyterian being the one who, by the by, never got what he gave." (Session Book of the Church)."

[the articles goes on to discuss the architecture and changes in the structure of the church building.]

From the entry for the Good Hope and Frierson Memorial Presbyterian Churches:

"Sometime between 1850 and 1851, four men from Lowndes County, AL, Dr. George P. Frierson, Charlie Frierson, Robert Frierson, and George M. Eldridge, along with their families and the blacks that they had brought with them, moved to DeSoto Parish (near Frierson, today) and created the first Presbyterian church in the area.

In 1852, the handful of Christians asked the pastor of the Shreveport church, Rev. J. Franklin Ford, to help them organize their church, named "Good Hope" after their church in Alabama. Rev. Ford assembled the group and the church was officially organized at the home of Robert Frierson with fifty-two members, six whites and forty-six

blacks. White members were: Dr. George Frierson, Mr. and Mrs. Eldridge, Robert Frierson, and Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Frierson. Dr. Frierson and Mr. Eldridge were ruling elders. Good Hope met in homes until the first building, located on the Phipp's place, was completed in 1854. The first statistical report of the Red River Presbytery in 1855 showed Good Hope with 24 members.

Rev. B. F. Peters became the first pastor of Good Hope in 1855 and remained until 1858. Rev. Peters held services only once a month, so the congregation attended the Baptist church one Sunday of the month and had prayer meeting the other two Sundays.

Then, in 1858, **Rev. E. Eells** served as pastor of the "Keatchie Group" as the churches were called at that time. He remained during the Civil War, but left for Virginia in 1866 when the area was in a state of confusion brought about by the end of the War which greatly affected Good Hope church.

Charlie Frierson had taken his family to Texas in 1866 while Dr. George Frierson and George Eldridge had moved their families to Central America. Robert Frierson had moved to Kingston. Even the church building itself was sold. All that remained of Good Hope Church were the black members who were now left to shift for themselves.

The black members did manage to keep the church together. One of their leaders was Nathaniel White, who, along with Jacob Gilliard and Jack Pierre, held prayer meetings which kept the members together."

[. . . There is more, beginning "in 1868 .." but, Rev. Eells had moved on...]



Keatchie Presbyterian Church

The Keatchie Presbyterian Church (1858) is a frame Greek Revival temple-form building located on Louisiana Highway 5 in a small crossroads community. A few alterations were made in the 1890s, but they have not destroyed the church's original character.

The Keatchie Presbyterian Church was built in the classical temple form, with a pedimented portico across the entire front. The fully developed entablature extends around the side elevations. There are four square Doric columns with matching pilasters.

The Keatchie Presbyterian Church is of state significance in the area of architecture as the finest among a very limited number of country Greek Revival churches in Louisiana. It is also of local note as a part of DeSoto Parish's distinctly Greek Revival architectural heritage.

The church is on the National Register for Historic Places.

(Photos and description from the web site of the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation at <http://www.crt.state.la.us/crt/ocd/hp/ocdhp.htm>. Specific information can be found at http://www.crt.state.la.us/nhl2/search_results.asp?search_type=historicname&value=Keatchie+Presbyterian+Church&pageno=1.)



Eells Family Census Reports

The unusual surname "Eells" was frequently misspelled by census enumerators and indexers, presenting a challenge to census researchers.

1850 US census, New Jersey, Atlantic Co., Galloway Twp.:

Edward Eells, 31, Pres. Clergy, b:Connecticut [*"Eells" incorrectly enumerated; Presbyterian Clergy*]
 Hettie, 26, no occup., b:Phila,PA
 William B., 1, no occup., b:KY
 Mary A. Blanchard, 20, no occup., b:Vermont

1860 US census, Louisiana, De Soto Parish, Keachi, Mansfield P.O., 20 Aug 1860 (page 4 of 5 census sheets for Keachi District of De Soto Parish):

Edward E???, 41, M, Pres. Preacher, \$150 real estate, b:CT [*Presbyterian Preacher*]
 Kellia??, 35, F, b:PA [*indexed as "Hillia"; correct name is "Hettie"*]
 Wm. B., 11, M, b:KY
 Minnie? C., 9, F, b:NJ [*Minnie or Minnee; indexed correctly as "Minnie"*]
 Anna, 7, F, b:KY
 Chas. C., 4, M, b:Choctaw N. [*born in Choctaw Nation (Indian Territory)*]

[Note: The surname in the 1860 census (image below) was transcribed as "Eicls" by ancestry.com and "Eids" in the De Soto Parish census transcript. Correct is "Eells" according to the De Soto Parish History quoted above.]

Edward Eells	41	M	Pres Preacher	150	Con		
Kellia	35	F			Pa		
Wm B.	11	M			Ky		1
Minnie C.	9	F			Ky		1
Anna	7	F			Ky		1
Chas C.	4	M			Choctaw N		

1870 US census, West Virginia, Kanawha Co., Jefferson Twp., P.O. Coalsmouth, 5 July:

Edward Eels, 51, Preacher, b:CN [*Eels incorrect*]
 Hettie Eels, 45, School Teacher, b:PA
 Minnie, 20, without occupation, b:NJ
 Annie, 17, without occupation, b:KY
 Edward, 8, no occup., b:LA [*Charles C. from 1860 census would have been 14; must have died*]
 Ann Norris, 13, House Keeper, b:VA
[Images were very clear and show the surname misspelled as "Eels" instead of "Eells".]

1880 US census, West Virginia, Kanawha Co., Saint Albans, 1 June:

Edward Eells, 61, head, Minister, b/fb/mb:CT [*Eells incorrect*]
 Hettie Eells, 55, wife, Keeps House, b/fb:PA, mb:Delaware
 Edward Eells, 18, son, At School. b:LA, fb:CT, mb:PA
 George Henderson, 38, son-in-law, Physician, b/fb:Ireland, mb:Delaware?
 Minnie Henderson, 30, dau, Keeps House, b:NJ, fb:CT, mb:PA
[and on same property in different dwelling]
 Walter Scott, black, 35, head, Minister
 Sophia Scott, black, 26, wife, Wash-woman

1880 US census, New York, Cattaraugus Co., Allegany, Village of Roch Vew, 16 July:

William Eells, head, 31, Working Oil Wells, b:KY, fb:NJ, mb:PA
 Carry, wife, 25, b/fb/mb:Ohio
 Margie, dau, 1, b:WV, fb:KY, mb:OH

1890 Census Substitute (ancestry.com): Washington, D.C. City Directories, 1890, 1891:

Rev. Edward Eells, 1842 8th Northwest, District of Columbia, 1890 and 1891

Rev. Edward Eells, Jr., 1842 8th Northwest, District of Columbia, 1890 and 1891

1900 US census, unable to locate families of Edward Sr., Edward Jr. or William Eells

1910 US census, Massachusetts, Worcester Co., Worcester, 2nd Ward, 20 Reservoir Street, 6 May 1910:

Edward Eells, head, 48, m 18 yr, b:LA, fb/mb:CN, Congregational Clergyman

Annie E., wife, 38, m 18 yr, 5/5 children, b:VA, fb:MA, mb:NY

Ernest E., son, 17, single, b:VA, fb:LA, mb:VA

Hastings, son, 14, single, b:NJ, fb:LA, mb:VA

Truth E., dau, 12, b:WV, fb:LA, mb:VA

Emmaline, dau, 10, single, b:WV, fb:LA, mb:VA

Julia A., dau, 5, single, b:NJ, fb:LA, mb:VA

[Note: surname indexed incorrectly as "Eills" by ancestry.com, but is clearly "Eells" in the images.]

1920 US census, unable to locate any of these Eells families

1930 US census, New York, Erie Co., Orchard Park, East-Hamburgh Twp., 3 April:

Earnest E. Eells, head, rents, 36, m at 24, b:VA, fb:LA, mb:VA, Presbyterian Clergyman

Ada C., wife, 36, m at 24, b/fb/mb:NY

Carvin E., son, 8, b:NY fb:VA, mb:NY

[indexed as given by ancestry.com; might be Calvin]

David C.C., son, 3, b:NY fb:VA mb:NY

1930 US census, Ohio, Delaware Co., Delaware City, Delaware Twp., 57 North Washington St., 10-11 April:

Hastings Eells, head, rents \$50, 34, m at 25, b/fb/mb:NJ, College Teacher

Amy, wife, 31, m at 22, b:NJ, fb/mb:USA

William, son, 6, single, b/fb/mb:NJ

1930 US census, Connecticut, Hartford Co., Hartford, Pct. 10, 360 Ganrel (Gaurel?) Street (apt. house?), 18 April:

Frederic S. Paisley, head, rent \$50, 32, m at 29, b:CT, fb:Delaware, mb:RI, Clerk in Insurance Office

Truth E., wife, 32, m at 30, b/fb/mb:VA

Eells/Eales family information sources

1. Eells Family Association, President
Walter F. Eells, Jr.
61 Country Club Road
Avon, CT 06001
2. Rev. Earnest Edward Eells, editor, Rev. Myron Eells, DD, Rev. William E. Eells, Rev. Edward Eells, and Walter Gibbs Eells, contributing authors, "Eells Family History In America, 1633-1952," (Interlaken, New York: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1985), copyright Eells Family Association, Sherman, Connecticut.
3. Eells Net Web site: <http://www.angelfire.com/tx/EellsNet/Page2.html>