

Memories of Galilee Church  
Written by George Shields

In regard to the baptizing of the Daniel boys as was told to me by my father, Emory Shields. They were baptized by Preacher Landrum, who was also the schoolteacher at Galilee. Mr. Landrum later wrote a book about the Daniel Boys. My father went to school to Mr. Landrum at Galilee.

I had the occasion to learn more about the Daniel boys from a son of one of them who lived in Edinburg Texas in 1938 or 39. I lived in Edinburg at that time. I was working at a citrus juice plant in San Carlos. One night the machinery broke down, and while it was down the floor crew gathered and began to talk. Mr. Smith, a nice old man, told us his real name was not Smith, but Daniel. Mr. Smith then proceeded to tell us how and why his name was changed.

Mr. Smith began by saying his daddy and uncle had lived in Arkansas. During that time there was a horse-thieving ring whose trail ran from Mexico to St. Louis. This trail ran through Mr. Smith's father's farm. Because of this, the outlaw horse thieves tried to get the Daniels to join the ring, and they refused. One day a friend of Mr. Smith's father told him that he had overheard one of the horse thieves say in a saloon that they had tried every thing they knew but powder and lead to get them to join the horse thieving ring. The horse thieves said they were going to try that now.

One night the two Daniel brothers went to a nearby salt lake to shoot deer. The deer were coming to the lake to lick the salt. When the Daniel brothers returned home, after hunting the deer they found Mr. Daniel's wife dead in the bed. She had been shot through the window.

After the death of Mrs. Daniel his father and uncle carried their guns all the time. One day his father was plowing corn and had left his rifle against a tree at the end of the row. When he was turning around at the end of a row one of the horse thieves took a shot at him. Mr. Smith's father ran and grabbed his rifle, shot and killed the horse thief. It so happened that the horse thieves had the law brought. As a consequence, Mr. Smith's father was charged with murder. Therefore, Mr. Smith's father and uncle left at night and went back east; where they came from in Georgia and stayed there until things had quieted down. Later, they came back and picked up their families, at night and went to Texas. They changed their names in Texas from Daniel to Smith. Mr. Smith then said, "I still have the bullet that killed my mother." He went on to say, "My father and uncle were baptized while they were in Georgia". Mr. Smith then said that he had lost trace of his relatives, and wished that he could get in touch with them. At this point, I told Mr. Smith I felt sure I knew about his father and uncle being "baptized back in Georgia and that what he said coincided with what my father had told me. Mr. Smith then asked me if I knew any Daniels back in Georgia. I told him yes. He then asked me what their given names were. I told him that one Daniel had married my first cousin and his name was Claude Daniel. I said that there were some more who lived over around Apple Valley. One of the boys was named Roy. He had a sister named Nida and when I said the name Nida Mr. Smith grabbed me and said that is my people. He said he knew that the people I was talking about was his people because Nida was an old family name and a rare name. I proceeded to give him their address.

*Note by Jack Danel (2006): The Mr. Smith referred to in here is Evan Wilson Smith, born 20 June 1891 in Warm Springs Alabama, the second child of Ben Smith after the Arkansas fracas. He was the son of Ben's second wife Eula Lee Irene Wray, and not of Lucinda, so he could not "have the bullet" since his mother died in 1918 in Texas.*

*Leta (Oleta Smith Beasley) says this is not an accurate telling of the story. To me, it looks like a late night bull session with "guys swapping lies".*

*[<http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=daniel-a&id=I443>]*