

Brown, Albert Erskine ^[1]

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Brown, Albert Erskine

by [C. Sylvester Green](#) ^[2], 1979

6 Aug. 1863–30 May 1924

Albert Erskine Brown, clergyman and educator, son of [William Albert G. Brown](#) ^[3] and Margaret Pattison Brown, was born in Jefferson City, Tenn. Following schooling in local preparatory schools, he attended [Carson-Newman College](#) ^[4] and later [Judson College](#) ^[5] in Marion, Ala., but there is no record of his graduation from either. Carson-Newman, years later, conferred on him an honorary D.D. degree.

For eight years, 1881–89, Brown was a teacher at Fairview Institute, near [Asheville](#) ^[6]. He was ordained in the gospel ministry in 1889 and served as pastor of Beaverdam, Berea, Mt. Carmel, and Asheville West End Baptist churches, all in the [Buncombe Association](#) ^[7], of which he was for several terms moderator. He served as secretary of the Mission Board of the Western North Carolina Baptist Convention (later dissolved) and as its president; still later he was assistant corresponding secretary (executive head) of the [North Carolina Baptist State Convention](#) ^[8].

His early pastoral ministry has been reported as very evangelistic. He soon became deeply concerned "by the ignorance of mountain preachers" and conceived as his mission the building of mountain schools, approved and often supported by the denomination. He resigned his local pastorates in 1899 and devoted the rest of his life to organizing and directing Southern Baptist Mountain Missions—churches and schools—a work underwritten jointly by the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and the Home Mission Board of the [Southern Baptist Convention](#) ^[9]. During those years more than forty schools were established, with an annual enrollment exceeding sixty-five hundred in a day before public schools were universal in the mountain areas of the state.

Historians not only credit Brown with an educationally improved leadership in Western North Carolina but also attribute the ultimate development of education at both the secondary and college level to the impetus he provided and the vision he inspired. This educational zeal was a family trait: his father was the first president of [Mars Hill College](#) ^[10], and A. E. Brown was one of five children, all of whom were teachers and three of whom were ordained ministers.

Brown was married, in 1885, to Lamanda Whitaker of [Henderson County](#) ^[11]. They had five children: William H., Jessie (Mrs. D. A. Greene), Beatrice (Mrs. Carl Gossett), Mack, and Mary (Mrs. Ray C. Hamrick).

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