

Murphy, John Albert ^[1]

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by [William S. Powell](#) ^[2], 1991

24 Jan. 1837–d. After 1892

John Albert Murphy, clergyman and poet, the son of John and Mary ("Molly") Livengood Murphy, was born in [Davidson County](#) ^[3] on his father's farm between Abbott's Creek and Rich Fork. The 1850 census lists three children in the family: Daniel K., 21, a teacher, and Hanna B., 17, and John A., 13, both students. He attended a log school at Reedy Run, three miles from his home, until 1853, when he entered [Catawba College](#) ^[4], then located in Newton. In the fall of 1857 he was accepted on trial by the St. Louis Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and was assigned to the Independence, Mo., circuit. He was ordained a deacon in 1859 and was a pastor for twenty-two years, attaining the position of presiding elder in the Boonville District by 1866. Articles by him appeared in the *St. Louis Christian Advocate*. In 1879 he transferred to the North-West Texas Conference and was assigned first to the Waco District and then to Fort Worth where he remained at least until 1884 when he became a member of the itinerant ministry. He was living in Austin in 1885.

His long poem, *Cosmostoria* ^[5], published in book form (151 pages) in 1878 in Chicago, has been compared to John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. He also was the author of numerous shorter poems including "The First Fallen Soldier of 1861," honoring North Carolinian Henry Wyatt, the first soldier killed in the Civil War, "Progressive Perfection," "Our Silver Wedding," and "Texas," composed on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone of the Texas capitol on 2 Mar. 1885. His "Get Into Some Good Library and Read" was published in S. Pollock Linn's *Golden Gleams of Thought* ^[6] in 1882, and four other poems appeared in the July 1892 issue of the *Magazine of Poetry*. In June 1885 [Trinity College](#) ^[7] conferred an honorary master's degree on Murphy and in 1889 Catawba College awarded him an honorary doctor of divinity degree.

Murphy's wife was Louisa Jane Yokeley of Davidson County.

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