

Mrs. Ann Grundy and the first Sunday School in Nashville

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by Damaris Witherspoon Steele, 2004, Pages 25 - 26.

The most authentic firsthand account of the first Sunday school in Nashville seems to be that of Mr. Samuel P. Ament, a Methodist, who was one of its organizers. He states that in about 1819, the reading of the Bible was discontinued in schools and that this suggested the idea of a Sunday school where children could be taught the Bible.

Mr. Ament wrote the following:

Mrs. Felix Grundy proposed this work, and on the first Sunday in July, 1820, she began her school with fifteen children. The place was a small frame house in the rear of where McKendree Church now stands. The little building was in a very dilapidated condition and there was no glass in the windows. The house was surrounded by a grove of cedar, elm and sugar trees and no other building was near the place. At the first meeting were present Mrs. Grundy, Nathan Ewing, Mildred Moore, Samuel P. Ament and fifteen children. Our school was opened with prayer and singing, and the first prayer was offered by Mr. Ewing. We used the common Webster spelling book and the New Testament. Our school met regularly every Sunday morning at eight o'clock and each one of us led in prayer and succession and each of us became a missionary to solicit children to join which subjected us to persecutions in almost every conceivable way. We were called Sabbath breakers, and violators of the law of the land and that we deserved punishment as the disturbers of peace. The finger of scorn was hurled at us on all occasions, and all the churches pronounced against us, declaring that we should be countenanced... One morning during the year 1822 while on my way to our little Sunday school, and while passing up Church Street, my attention was called to a large paste board that was suspended on the door of the Methodist Church. I crossed over the street to read the notice and found in large letters the following words: "No desecration of the holy Sabbath by teaching on the Sabbath in this church."