

### 374 SEDWICK, GEORGE C. – [REV. GEORGE COOK SEDGWICK]

**Publisher**

**Fredericksburg**

Publisher of Baptist hymnal through Fredericksburg press of Green & Cady in 1815.

Sedwick was a Baptist evangelical with an inclination toward musical worship that induced him to gather and publish a collection of suitable hymns during his ministry in Virginia. When he published that collection, he was something of an itinerant, serving several Baptist congregations on the Northern Neck, including the Rock Hill Church in Stafford County, an affiliation that Sedwick noted on that hymnal's title page. Employing the press of Timothy Green (194) and Ebenezer P. Cady (070) at nearby Fredericksburg, his *A Selection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs: Designed to Engage the Children of God* (1815) proved to be the only such work he published in his lifetime; yet it also was one that justified each tune's inclusion in the assemblage by citing the authority of its source – including several that were the work of Rev. Andrew Broaddus, the noted Fredericksburg Baptist leader.

His stay in Virginia was, however, just a brief moment in a life that was spent travelling and organizing new Baptist congregations. Born in Maryland, Sedwick had studied for his ministry with Dr. William Staughton (1770-1829), the pastor of Philadelphia's First Baptist Church from 1805 to 1811. He was ordained at Hartwood Church in Westmoreland County in 1806, and married his first wife there. Assigned to a circuit that included Stafford County, Sedwick helped organize the Rock Hill Church in 1812 and ministered twice-monthly to that flock until 1817, when he took on a new assignment in Winchester. There he established a "female seminary," evidently the first such denominational school in Virginia, beginning an ongoing commitment to education. In 1820, he undertook a preaching tour in Ohio which led to his relocation to Zanesville, where he formed and led that town's first Baptist church in 1821. In that role, he became a key figure in organizing the Baptist associations of Parkersburg in 1821 and Meigs' Creek in 1826.

By 1826, however, the Baptist churches of the Old Northwest had been torn by defections triggered by the Cambellite movement – a reformist perspective founded in New Testament theology and propagated in America by Rev. Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) of Bethany, Virginia (today the northern panhandle of West Virginia). In an effort to offset Campbell's publishing and educational initiatives, Sedwick embraced similar ones; in 1826 he helped organize the Ohio Baptist Convention, serving as its corresponding secretary; in June 1827, that body began issuing its monthly *Western Religious Magazine*, edited by Sedwick; that periodical would evolve unto the *Western Miscellany* in 1831, after being briefly titled the *Regular Baptist Miscellany*, evincing the Ohio convention's negative view of Campbell and his irregulars. Then in 1831, the convention formed the "Granville Literary and Theological Institution," a college that institutionalized the Ohio Baptist Education Society that was founded and managed by Sedwick – an institution that became today's Denison University and induced Campbell to found Bethany College in 1840.

By the mid-1830s, Sedwick determined to promote his "regular Baptist" faith in Kentucky. He removed to Frankfort, Kentucky in 1837 to start a new church there, as well as help organize the Louisville Association of Baptists that fall. He would take charge of new churches in Paris (Bourbon County) in 1840 and Georgetown (Scott County) in 1843 before he finally returned to Zanesville in semi-retirement in 1844. There Sedwick died in the summer of 1864, in the midst of the disruptions his church suffered in the Civil War.

***Personal Data***

Born: Nov. 3 1785 Calvert County, Maryland.

Married [1]: Aug. 5 1806 Sarah Hall @ Westmoreland County, Virginia.

Married [2]: June 29 1826 Elizabeth Dare @ Putnam County, Ohio.

Died: Aug. 25 1864 Zanesville, Ohio.

Children: By Sarah: Robert Hall (b. 1808); Elizabeth (b. 1810); Adoniram Judson (b. 1812); Frances Virginia (b. 1821).

By Elizabeth: Jane Patterson (b. 1827); William S. (b. 1836); Joseph Holden (b. 1838); Howard Malcolm (b. 1843).

Sources: Imprint (S&S 35892); Smith, *Baptists: In Western States*; Taylor, *Virginia Baptists*; Spencer, *Kentucky Baptists*; Benedict, *Baptist Denomination*; Music & Richardson, *Baptist Hymnody in North America*; genealogical data from Sedwick family charts post on Ancestry.com (March 2013).