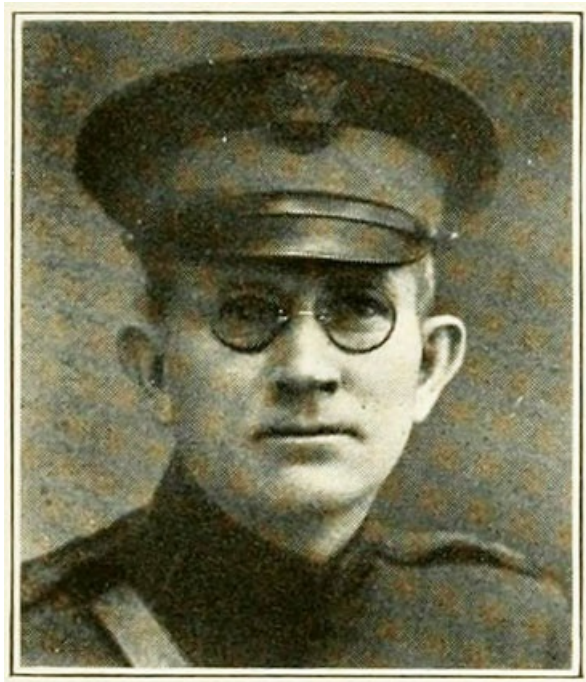


## **Purcell, Clare** <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Purcell, Clare**

by Grady L. E. Carroll, 1994

**17 Nov. 1884–8 Feb. 1964**



"1st Lieut. Clare Purcell," photograph, circa 1918.  
From *The 131st U.S. Infantry in the World War*, p.  
[37], by Colonel Joseph B. Sanborn, published 1915,  
Chicago. Presented on Archive.org.

Clare Purcell, *Methodist* <sup>[2]</sup> clergyman, was born at Columbia, Ala., the son of William Henry and Mary Callen Purcell. His ancestors were from eastern North Carolina. He received his undergraduate degree from *Birmingham-Southern College* <sup>[3]</sup> in 1916 and a diploma in theology and the bachelor of divinity degree from *Vanderbilt University* <sup>[4]</sup> Divinity School. In *1918–19* <sup>[5]</sup> he was chaplain of the 131st Infantry, U.S. Army, American Expeditionary Force. Ordained deacon by Bishop Elijah E. Hoss and elder by Bishop James H. McCoy, he was assigned to a series of churches in Alabama until elected a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1938 and assigned to supervise the North Carolina, western North Carolina, South Carolina, and upper South Carolina conferences. Over the years his assignments changed, but North Carolina was a part of them until 1948, when he was assigned solely to Alabama. He retired in 1956.

Bishop Purcell was chairman of the Commission on World Service and Finance, chairman of the Commission on General Headquarters of the Methodist church, and a member of the Commission on Unification of the Methodist Episcopal church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant church. He also was president of the Council of Bishops and a frequent contributor to church periodicals. Purcell was awarded honorary degrees by Birmingham-Southern College, the *University of Alabama* <sup>[6]</sup>, *Duke University* <sup>[7]</sup>, and *Emory University* <sup>[8]</sup>.

In 1910 he married Ida West, and they became the parents of William Wood-Rowe, John Robert, and Ida Claire.

#### **References:**

Elmer T. Clark, *An Album of Methodist History* (1952 [portrait]) and *Methodism in Western North Carolina* (1966).

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*Who's Who in America*, vol. 26 (1950).

#### **Additional Resources:**

Purcell, Clare, 1884-1964. Manuscript Collection Number 319, Pitts Theology Library, Archives and Manuscript

Department, Emory University. <http://www.pitts.emory.edu/Archives/text/mss319.html> [9] (accessed May 13, 2014).

Sanborn, Joseph Brown. *The 131st U. S. infantry (First infantry Illinois national guard) in the world war; narrative-operations-statistics*. Chicago. 1919. <https://archive.org/details/131stusinfantryf00sanb> [10] (accessed May 13, 2014).

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1 January 1994 | Carroll, Grady L. E., Sr.

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