

Turrentine, Morgan Clower ^[1]

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by Durward T. Stokes, 1996

17 Sept. 1800–15 July 1881

Morgan Clower Turrentine, pioneer missionary of the [Methodist Episcopal](#) ^[2] church to the Indian territory in the southwestern United States, was born in [Orange County](#) ^[3]. His parents were James and Catherine Clower Turrentine, and his paternal grandparents were Samuel and Mary Bryant Turrentine. Morgan's brothers and sisters were William, Samuel, George, Allen Augustus, Daniel Clower, James Samuel, Thomas C., Joseph Tarpley, Sarah, Frances L., Elizabeth, and Nancy L. When Morgan was only a few years old, the James Turrentine and Clower families moved to Georgia, settling near Milledgeville, where the youth grew to manhood.

The religious background of the Turrentines was [Presbyterian](#) ^[4], but Morgan chose the Methodist Episcopal church and was ordained into its ministry. Being physically strong and a fearless crusader of religion, he was dispatched by his church to carry Christianity to the western Indians. On numerous hazardous journeys through the wilderness, he arrived at the villages of the Indians, slept in their huts or tents, ate their food, learned to communicate with them, and cultivated their friendship with considerable success. Only on one occasion did he face failure. Several Indians became intoxicated during the absence of their chief and decided to burn the minister at the stake. Just before the fire was lighted, the chief returned and stopped the execution.

Turrentine made many other journeys during his ministry. He frequently visited his numerous relatives, especially his brother, General Daniel Clower Turrentine, who had settled in Gadsden, Ala., after being instrumental in founding that town. The minister also returned to his native state occasionally, but his lifework was primarily with the Indians and with congregations in Georgia and Alabama.

In 1835 he married Lydia Mary Rothwell of Woodford Plantation in [Brunswick](#) ^[5] (now [Columbus](#) ^[6]) County. Their children were Mary C., Sarah, and John Rothwell. His wife died in 1837, and two years later he married Julia Elizabeth Flowers; their children were Frances Virginia, Eugenia, and Frederick. The missionary died in [Wilmington](#) ^[7] while visiting his son John; he was buried there in Oakdale Cemetery.

References:

Census returns, Brunswick County, 1850 (microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

Deeds, Births, Marriages, and Wills (Brunswick County Courthouse, Bolivia, and Orange County Courthouse, Hillsborough).

New Orleans Christian Advocate, 4 Oct. 1877.

Southern Christian Advocate, 24 Dec. 1847.

George Ruford Turrentine, *The Turrentine Family* (1952). ^[8]

Subjects:

[Biographies](#) ^[9]

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Authors:

[Stokes, Durward T.](#) ^[11]

Origin - location:

[Orange County](#) ^[12]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[13]

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