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Simultaneously, Methodist history began in the territory later to separate from Mississippi and become Alabama. On his first trip to Europe Dow boarded a ship at Montreal on October 16, 1799 and haggled with the captain to lower the fare to five guineas from fifteen. As the craft “put down the river” a woman passenger said, “I judge this man’s a Methodist.” Dow’s journal records that he turned away “with disgust unconcealed” and countered, “What do you lump me with that despised people for?” The woman’s revealing reply was, “Because you don’t drink and be jovial and cheerful as the rest of us are; but you are gloomy and cast down like that people.”

In 1803 Dow decided to visit the Indian country west of Georgia. Friends furnished him with a pass from the Governor of Georgia, a good horse, plenty of clothing, a watch, and $53.00. Starting on April 19, he crossed the Oconee River and soon after joined a party of travellers who were passing through the country of the Tombigbee, Alabama, and Flint rivers.

On this trip Dow reported that Colonel John Hawkins, the Indian agent, “treated us cool; so we quit him and went on.” A brief reading of Hawkins’ notes and those of his biographer reveals that Hawkins, a friend and personal representative of six presidents of the United States, was experiencing his troubles with Georgians who so often brought to naught efforts to civilize and encourage the peaceful instincts of the native Indians who with some reason viewed the white man as the land-hungry pillager of the lands of the tribal fathers. Doubtless, this fact accounts for some coolness on the part of Hawkins. He might reasonably have assumed that this group was another land-seeking party of trouble makers with the Indians and for him.

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1 This paper, inspired by an address delivered by William H. Brantley, Jr. at Leroy High School in September, 1960, was read at the annual meeting of the Alabama Historical Association, Mobile, April 27, 1962.

2 Peter A. Brannon, “Through the Years,” Montgomery Advertiser, Sept. 6, 1951.
Dow's party caught up with a man hunting horses who guided them to the first house in the 'Bigbee settlements, a trip of nearly two weeks and 400 miles. The rest of the horsemen hoped to save thirty or more miles by swimming the Alabama River and fording the swamp. They were delayed two days by rains while the preacher rode down the river ten miles and for $1.50 obtainedlodgings from a half-breed Indian. Dow left a date in the Tensaw for Sunday and went by the Cutoff across to the west side of the Tombigbee. Travelling seven miles through the canebrake or swamp, the itinerant found a thick settlement and then a scattered one along the river for about seventy miles.

Through these settlements he sent ahead his appointments for preaching, and filled them. A characteristic comment with which he followed his reports of his travels reads, "and the fruit [of the preaching] I expect to see at a future day."

This route passed through the present day community of Tensaw and near the site of Fort Mims, scene of the massacre a decade later. After the Cutoff, the thick settlement was in and around Mt. Vernon and Ft. Stoddard.

At Mt. Vernon the travelling companions from Georgia rejoined the group and accompanied it through the Choctaw Nation, following a route due west, probably from St. Stephens, to the Natchez settlement. The distance travelled approached eight hundred miles from Georgia. By now Dow was almost without funds. But he recognized this as no problem—merely an occasion for another "exercise of my faith." However, in the sixth town (Sixtown) of the Choctaw Indians, Lorenzo traded his saddlecloth for corn to feed his horse.

In the Natchez settlement Dow wrote in his journal, "Here I was called to another exercise of my faith." In a strange land without any money he and his companions approached the first home to which they came in the Natchez settlement. The master of the house "was once a Methodist" and from travellers arriving the preceding week had received news of the approach of the party of four, including Dow. The reception was friendly and the host arranged for a meeting the next day where "good I trust was done."

The night after, a Baptist held a meeting for Dow's preaching at his home. Dow then proceeded toward Natchez while his companions parted company to go on to West Florida to see their father.

At a home "where they were called Methodists" the reception was cool until a passport and letters from Reverend Mead and Reverend Hull, testifying to the good character and preaching ability of the team, were produced. A Methodist preacher, Brother Moses Floyd, met the newcomer that night and, having previously received letters from Georgia from Dow, was friendly. These credentials and the acceptance by the known preacher brought about a warmer reception. Even the Governor was likewise friendly. The Mayor permitted the use of the assembly room for meetings.

To complete the trip, which demonstrated his physical stamina as well as his courage and devotion, Dow returned to Georgia after covering an estimated four thousand miles in less than seven months (October 28, 1808). That the journey had been hazardous was easy to prove:

His horse had to be replaced. His watch went to pay expenses. His pantaloons were worn out. His riding chevals were worn through in several places. For the last several hundred miles he had travelled without stockings, shoes or mocassins or outer garment because he had sold the cloak in West Florida. His coat and vest were worn through to the shirt and his hat case and umbrella had been spoiled by tree prongs.

But Lorenzo Dow proved his philosophy by declining
many offers of money and “handsome presents.” He accepted only those items obviously necessary for meeting his engagements and refused all else. As he put it, “... and knowing that imposters are fond of money, I was convinced that Satan could not be found wanting to whisper in the minds of the people that my motives were sinister or impure.”

Dow’s courtship of Peggy, the adopted daughter of Smith Miller and sister of Mrs. Miller, was in itself unusual. Nevertheless, they were married on September 3, 1804. The understanding was clear that he might travel twelve months out of thirteen or three years out of four. Likewise, they discussed the extent of his devotion to his preaching in this manner and to the effect that Peggy would “never say do not go to your appointment, for if you should stand in my way, I should pray to God to remove you, which I believe he would answer. ...”

After the wedding in Western, Connecticut the Millers, Peggy, and Lorenzo started south again for Natchez. All travelled by different means and routes, the preacher by horse over the usual roads and Indian trails. At the Western Conference of the Methodists, meeting in Harrison County, Kentucky in October 1804, Dow was joined by two more ministers, Reverend Blackman and Reverend Barnes, who had been selected by Bishop McKendree, to accompany him to Mississippi.

The problem of finding the way over the 800-mile route, half of it through Indian country, was solved when “Crazy” Dow, as he was called, agreed on one of his preaching tours to guide the newly-assigned ministers through the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations to Mississippi.

On the way they left Franklin, Tennessee, October 23, 1804, and the next day fell in with some families moving west from North Carolina, but who had been alarmed by Indians. They were hastily back-tracking from fear of savages, when they learned that Lorenzo Dow was one of the men on horseback, and the North Carolinians too stopped for camp. October 25 they reached the Tennessee River, but the wind was so high no one attempted to cross but the post rider, John Swaney, and he with great danger. The route was that of the Natchez Trace. On the twenty-sixth they crossed at a small garrison and settlement of half-breed Indians. They reached Bigtown of the Chickasaws with their provisions about gone. The horses were fed in the canebrake.

At another village, where whites lived, Dow held meetings. The villagers gave him necessary provisions for the trip and after two days the party got underway again. With a gun in the party “wild turkey were killed from flocks in number.” Bears, deer, and wolves were seen in these woods. On November 4 the travellers repassed the ground where Dow had providentially escaped the Indians on another trip, and arrived at the settlement of Natchez. They called on Moses Floyd, a preacher on Bigblack. Here Preacher Barnes left to begin his work. Blackman travelled farther.

A week later a camp meeting was set near Washington. Ground had been laid out there for a college for which Congress had made a substantial money donation and 20,000 acres. Though this was a territory at the time, “it will become a state when inhabitants number 60,000,” Dow recorded in his journal.

On the way now to Georgia, the itinerant Dow described his observations in the Indian nations. At Sixtown of the Choctaws he noted the burial of the dead on a scaffold and the spot “where the flesh was” after the bone picker had performed his job. The friends of the deceased wept twice a day and sometimes hired mourners to add to the noise. So
much noise was made that the horses were scared. He also described a procedure then out of date. If one was sick, a council of Indian doctors met and decided whether there were prospects for recovery. Their judgment was not questioned. If the patient was going to die, “humanity induced the neckbreaker to do his office.” The story went further to tell of a European for whom the neckbreaker’s services were to be enlisted. The ill man heard the verdict and hastily departed for the woods where full recovery was made. In retaliation, the Indians abolished the custom by breaking the neckbreaker’s neck.

Dow’s next stop was near the first house on the Tombigbee settlement, four miles from Ft. Stephens.6

The Reverend Dow, “Crazy” Dow, or the Cosmopolite, were names Dow used to advantage or as he pleased. Probably, he found “Crazy” the attention getter he utilized effectively to draw the people into his camp meetings or home preaching, as the case might be.

Dow was not a well man. Evidently, asthma was one of his ailments, along with malnutrition, malaria and smallpox. No doubt his outdoor life, much of it on horseback, contributed to his recovery and continued strength. His wife, Peggy, seemed to feel no hesitancy about travelling, except when completely incapacitated by illness. The couple had one child who died during the mother’s long illness in the British Isles. This did not interfere with Lorenzo’s preaching, however, as he stayed by the sick faithfully as long as he was permitted. But both man and wife shared the keen devotion to his ministry and he preached whenever possible.

During the eighteen months in Europe, 1805-1807, spasms of the most extraordinary kind affected Dow and it is reported that “the most celebrated of the faculty” were baffled. His nervous strength was reduced and his constitu-

tion so affected that the journal reports dolefully: “Now his sun appeared declining, and his career drawing to a close.” However, he did not even remotely consider giving up his preaching. Contrary to the advice of the doctors, a stiff leather jacket with buckles to provide stays became his regular apparel. When he could not ride horseback, he used a gig or little wagon. Likewise, he was prevented from standing throughout his sermons, but sat or reclined some part of the meetings over a period of seven years. Bishop Francis Asbury, too, in his diary reported sitting or reclining part of the time when he was forced to preach even though in pain.

The most grievous economic problems overcame the Dows in Natchez, as a result of having no considerable personal means and undertaking to help Peggy’s step-father, Smith Miller, who had obligated himself for the purchase of acreage on which a mill construction project began. At a time (1812) when friends believed they had struck it rich and enemies appeared to have gleefully pointed out the plantations, homes and even slaves that had become part of the Dow wealth, the opposite was very much the situation. The preacher himself indicated he had acquired a small piece of property in the canebrake on which he had built a small shack. But when this was needed by a friend in distress, Lorenzo and Peggy gave it up and started east again.

For Peggy Dow the trips on horseback were an ordeal. On one occasion she and her husband passed three days merely travelling from Natchez to the outskirts of the Natchez settlements. She pictured this new experience of travel with no tent, a lonely desert inhabited by wild beasts and savages and she was so frightened she could not sleep. However, Lorenzo was quite happy and composed on this, his tenth trip through the wild country.

Forty miles they travelled the fourth day as they reached the Pearl River after dark. Toward evening of the next day

6 Life and Writings of Lorenzo Dow, 155-158.
they met a company of Indians making camp. The savages struck terror in Peggy's heart. But they crossed the slough called the "hell hole" over a temporary bridge the Indians had made of poles and canes. The next day with an early start they aimed for a man's house on the Chickasaw River. Peggy says Lorenzo lost the way and found an Indian village where they learned they had ten miles yet to go, at sundown. "We came to the house, the family were gone to bed, but the woman got up, and although she was half Indian, she treated me with more attention than many would have done, who are educated among the more refined inhabitants of the earth," she later wrote in Viscissitudes.

This night Mrs. Dow slept well, unafraid, and the next morning they travelled the thirty-odd miles to the Tombigbee settlements, reaching the first white settlers about two or three o'clock in the afternoon.

The tedious trip continued until they reached Millbridge, Georgia in December, 1812.7

Generally, the reaction found prevalent among those who have even heard of the Reverend Lorenzo Dow has been something like this: "Oh, Lorenzo Dow! He was not in good standing with the Methodists."

Certainly, Lorenzo Dow was a pioneer. But a brief outline of his actual relations with the authorities of his time, in the church and out, proves that he was a man who unquestionably brought a spiritual message to many who might not otherwise have been privileged even to see or hear a minister of the Gospel.

First, young Dow as a boy in his teens joined the Methodists in New England at a meeting where the Reverend Hope Hull preached.8 Hull was an associate of Bishop Asbury, a widely known and followed Methodist cleric known best in

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7 The Eccentric Preacher, 115-121.
8 James W. Lee, et al., Illustrated History of Methodism (New York, 1900), 371-378.
10 The Eccentric Preacher, 54.

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flesh, they will make a public stand against this shameless intruder, this most daring imposter.

Peggy's comment regarding the influence of this letter on the work accomplished runs, "And no thanks to him that it did not bring Lorenzo into the greatest distress and difficulties that a man could have been brought into. But through the mercy of God it was otherwise overruled."

In Ireland and England he received the courtesy of many a Methodist pulpit as well as those of independent groups and other denominations. While there on one of his inspired pilgrimages, Dr. Thomas Coke, righthand man and associate of the Reverend John Wesley, offered to pay his expenses for a period, if he would return to America and assume the duties of a circuit.

Although Dow loved to preach, he was cautious about becoming restrained or controlled by such supervision as that he considered the part of the Circuit Rider of the people called Methodist. Then, too, he felt the urge to travel far and wide and while not altogether unplanned (appointments were sent ahead for preaching engagements frequently as much as a year later), the planning he preferred to arrange on his own initiative. At one General Conference the "Northern preachers" came armed with plans to restrict Dow's use of Methodist houses of worship and the "giving out of appointments" by regular Methodist preachers. The "Southern preachers," more familiar with his work and effective influence, soon dissolved the effort for the advocated restraint.11

Public officials provided passports and certificates for the continuation of his ministry overseas and in the wilderness as well as more heavily settled areas of this nation. Among them were numbered three governors, State Department officials and legislators.12 Similar introductory letters and certificates of good conduct were supplied him when he explored new territory or areas of no previous visits.13 Jesse Lee, who served as chaplain of the Congress of the United States, accorded the "Eccentric Preacher" the privilege of addressing Congress in his place.

Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat more than once, when their paths crossed that of Dow, gave him encouragement and directions to places where Methodists were received for accommodations of room and board. With accommodations so hard to come by in those days, the "Fathers," as the bishops were deferentially known, would hardly have risked their own subsequent receptions, had their references for Dow been undesirable in the eyes of Methodists.

At a conference held by the Methodists in Augusta, Georgia Dr. Coke was not only cordial to the pioneering Lorenzo Dow, but told the conference assembled that he knew of no harm that Dow had done the Methodists and "but in sundry instances to the reverse." Bishop Asbury instructed the announcement to be made that this itinerant preacher was to preach in the meeting house while the conference was sitting.14

Some fifty years after the end of the career of Dow, the biographer of Bishop James O. Andrew listed many of the early preachers whose preaching had influenced him while he was a child. The first mentioned was Hope Hull who, when he held the baby in his arms for baptism, prayed that he should grow up to be a minister and die a Methodist bishop. After Hull came many, many names well known in Methodism in the South, but Bishop Andrew stated, "but there was none who made such an impression on him as was made by Lorenzo Dow. Lorenzo had passed through Elbert and left an appointment. It was for eight o'clock at night, perhaps

12 *The Dealings of God, Man, and the Devil; etc.* (Middletown, 1849).
13 *Life and Writings of Lorenzo Dow*, 96, 120.
14 *The Eccentric Preacher*, 64, 66, 73, 130.
eighteen months ahead. The day came and the people gathered together, and at just the time appointed, a Negro with a pine torch came stalking through the woods, with Lorenzo Dow behind him.\textsuperscript{15}

The biographer of Bishop Francis Asbury, first American Methodist bishop, tells us not only of Dow's receipt of the name "Crazy Dow" but of his ingenuity in turning the title to his advantage as well as the liking he showed for the sophisticated name "Cosmopolite." According to Asbury, "Dow's fearlessness, experiences, and knowledge of the world made him master of every situation. Unruly camp meetings became silent and humble at the sound of his voice or at the sight of his fragile but awe-inspiring presence."\textsuperscript{16}

A Methodist historian from Mississippi rather succinctly pictures the man and the times:

Though he was often treated somewhat unbrotherly and even repulsively by some of the lead-Methodist ministers, he was a devoted lover and uncompromising friend of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and turned all the net proceeds of his labors to her benefit. He was generally looked on as eccentric, but if this estimation of him was correct, his eccentricity was always on the safe side. He was singularly pious, self-sacrificing, zealous, laborious, and useful as a wandering Methodist evangelist. He could not consent to be trammeled by any conference or local ties.\textsuperscript{17}

The report of a sermon in the Alexandria (Virginia) Gazette, February 18, 1835, the year after the Reverend Dow died, affords an excellent insight into the life and works of "The Gentleman—the Christian:"

Some twenty-eight years bygone, I first heard of the since far-celebrated Lorenzo Dow. It was in the town of Wheeling, and the narrator was a gentleman from the vicinity of Nashville in Tennessee. An auditory of ten or a dozen, all as uninformed of Lorenzo Dow as myself, listened to him. He narrated some of Lorenzo's eccentricities, in personal appearance and manner, and he especially gave the threads of a discourse he had then recently heard from the preacher, in which he took by way of a text, 'The Gentleman and the Christian.' I was then a young man, and forcibly impressed with much of what was narrated, though persuaded it was more the sentiments of the narrator than the preacher.

About two months afterward, journeying from Morgantown, Virginia, to Washington, Pennsylvania, I learned on the way that Lorenzo Dow was to preach on the evening of the day at Washington. I pushed my horse and made Washington by early candlelight. I was told preaching had commenced, and hastened to the courthouse. The instant the preacher's voice struck my ear, I perceived he was repeating his discourse upon the text 'The Gentleman and the Christian.' The verisimilitude could not be mistaken, for the heads of that discourse, as narrated at Wheeling, had sunk deep into my mind. But the matter was tenfold more impressive coming from the lips of Lorenzo Dow himself.

He described the gentleman—he belonged to no class of society exclusively—he constituted one of no exclusive class—his characteristics were disregard of self respect and kindness for others—he was no pragmatic babbler—no clamor to be heard in company—not one whose mouth was always open, his ears always closed. He was a man whose first consideration was for the comfort of others—making himself secondary in everything. He could not be selfish—he was innately generous—he would do, and he would suffer—he never exacted, he never remembered he had done a service, for he never felt that his service was of value to be remembered. His humility was as conspicuous as his kindness. But he was not all things to all men, though he was in all things and to all men a gentleman, he never submitted to base compliances, but he never avoided or refused civilities, that softened the prejudices or preconceived opinions of those with whom he was brought into contact. He maintained that men of this description were to be found in all classes, and through every grade of society, from the lowest to the most elevated and this, he said, was the true character of the Christian.

He pursued the parallel in the history of the Saviour. His conformity to the formalities of the Jewish Church—His association with the publicans and sinners—His controversies with the doctors of the temple—His association with the poor fishermen—His humiliation and death. He continued the parallel in the character and conduct of Paul,
and he concluded by an appeal to the auditory, if the true gentleman and the true Christian were not of near kindred, if not one and the same character, the rule of life of both being, in the main, that of the Saviour's injunction. 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.'

18 Quoted from the Cincinnati (Ohio) Gazette, date unrecorded.