

April 12, 1959

Wets Throw Damper
On Oklahoma Repeal

By Leland Webb

OKLAHOMA CITY--(BP)--With doors thrown open to legal liquor in Oklahoma for the first time in the state's 51-year history, United Dry Association will now concentrate "on legislation for adequate protection of lives on the highways and safety in public places, for public school education, and for a state program of rehabilitating alcoholics."

Oklahoma voters chose repeal of prohibition by a majority of 81,568, according to complete, unofficial totals despite an intense but short campaign by dry forces. Total vote was 396,442 for repeal and 314,874 against.

Sam W. Scantlan, Oklahoma City, superintendent of rural and city missions for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma was leader for dry forces. He was released by the convention last November to serve as acting executive secretary for United Drys in the campaign. He will now return to his convention duties.

Baptists were among leaders in the dry campaign. Edward Wolfe, pastor of Kentucky Ave. Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, was released by his church to give full-time to United Dry efforts. David C. Shapard, Oklahoma City attorney and Baptist layman was public relations director. Shapard had helped lead the last defeat of repeal efforts in 1949. U. S. Sen. Robert S. Kerr, another Baptist layman, donated \$10,000 to the cause. The Baptist Messenger, state Baptist paper, distributed 25,000 copies of a special eight-page reprint edition with articles against repeal.

The dry campaign was waged chiefly by churches with Baptist churches co-operating fully. For many churches the campaign came at a time when revivals were in progress.

For the first time this repeal election was initiated by legislative referendum. Previous elections had come through petitions. The 1957 election on county option for beer, which was the first dry defeat since the 1933 beer election, had resulted from Drys' petition.

Gov. J. Howard Edmundson, who took office in January, worked actively to have the legislature submit repeal to a vote. Final passage by the legislature calling for an Apr. 7 election came on Feb. 18.

Joe Shackford, United Dry president and associate pastor of St. Luke's Methodist Church in Oklahoma City blamed political pressures and a "quickie election" for the defeat.

He pointed to a governor's race "weighted with a wet propaganda" because it lacked a dry advocate. Battling against time, dry forces found themselves "overtaken in the battle with the tide clearly rising in our favor," he declared.

Many Dry leaders felt their cause had made strong gains in the last weeks before election. Dry vote was the smallest polled in a repeal election since 1936. In the 1949 repeal election, prohibition was maintained by a 55,000-vote majority.

However, the Dry majority has become smaller in each repeal election---in 1936, 1940, and 1949.

Twenty-seven of the state's 77 counties voted in favor of repeal. But those in favor included all of the 12 most heavily-populated counties. The two counties with largest population, Oklahoma and Tulsa, delivered heavy wet majorities.

April 12, 1959

2

Baptist Press

Churches In Kentucky
Total 615,000 Members

LOUISVILLE--(BP)--The General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, host state to the 1959 Southern Baptist Convention, has 2274 co-operating churches. Their total membership is 615,001.

Long Run Baptist Association of churches, comprising the Louisville metropolitan area, is the largest of 82 association in Kentucky. Its churches have total membership of 85,000.

Total membership of churches affiliated with the general association is more than twice what it was in 1927 when the SBC last convened in Louisville. At that time there were 1965 churches with 304,262 members. The number of associations of churches has remained constant.

A Negro Baptist body has the next largest Baptist membership in the state. The General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky has 500 co-operating churches totalling 130,000 members.

The General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, affiliated with the SBC, has set definite goals for the period of the Baptist Jubilee Advance ending in 1964.

It will endeavor to establish 700 new churches, missions, branch Sunday schools, and institutional services during the period 1958-1964 as a part of the overall SBC 30,000 Movement. The goals for 1959 include starting 40 branch Sunday schools, 10 institutional services, and 50 missions plus constituting 40 new churches.

The Western Recorder, weekly general association newsmagazine published in suburban Middletown, has a circulation of approximately 60,000.

A survey of general association activities was made last year. The 1958 session of the general association rejected the educational proposals contained in survey recommendations but the remainder of the recommendations are still being studied by the state executive board.