

REMEMBERING

MISS PEARL AMELIA BIGLER

MISSIONARY TO BRAZIL

1926 - 1969

Personal Information

Born January 22, 1898 in Bradford, Pa. Moved to Macon when about 10 years of age

Parents - Mr. and Mrs. George Abram Bigler

Only daughter. 3 brothers (one died in childhood).

She had life-long affiliation with Tabernacle Church of Macon.

EDUCATION: (in the order listed)

Left John W. Burke Grammar School in the 5th grade to work in a 5 and 10-cent store. She then worked in a bakery.

Working student at Martha Berry School, Rome, Georgia. She worked in the home of the school founder, caring for her elderly mother.

Diploma student at the WMU Training School, Louisville, Ky. for one year.

Student with her brothers at Baptist Bible Institute, New Orleans, La. (She received the Bachelor of Christian Training Degree.)

Nursing student at Baptist Hospital, Columbia, S. C. (completed the practical nursing course.)

Student at Bessie Tift College, Forsyth, Georgia. Graduated with AB Degree on June 1, 1926 at the age of 28 years.

Other Work Background:

Good Will Center worker - Adams Duck Mill, Macon; Kincaid Mill, Griffin, Ga. and Trion Mills, Forsyth, Ga.

Mission Appointment:

None by Southern Baptists. Because of the depression, no funds were available for new missionaries.

Pearl felt God's call to Brazil. She made her own contacts with missionaries after learning Southern Baptists could not send her. Brazilian missionaries were overjoyed to know of her desire to work in Brazil. She was given \$400 for her boat passage. Dr. A. C. Baker, Tabernacle's pastor, concerned about her, told her Tabernacle would try to send her \$25 per month. This support was faithfully provided through the depression. It was greatly increased by Tabernacle Church in the 1950s.

Pearl arrived in Brazil December 31, 1926. She went to Victoria to live with Southern Baptist missionaries while she learned the Portuguese language. About a year later she moved to Porto Alegre, a booming coastal city in South Brazil. She remained in this general area throughout her mission service.

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Service in Brazil:

Pearl Bigler lived in dire poverty during most of her missionary service because of her meager support (she did not have sufficient funds to support herself comfortably and adequately), and because she saw such overwhelming need she sacrificed her own personal needs and desires and put large amounts of the funds she received into construction of mission buildings and the purchasing of necessary items for the people she served. Most of them were very poor. It is believed that she "skimped" on meals and this weakened her body substantially. She suffered from many allergies and from malnutrition.

Her Work:

Miss Pearl Bigler made initial contacts with Brazilians, enlisted them into membership in the good will centers or chapels, won them to Christ, organized Southern Baptist churches, trained leadership, and maintained established work. While in Victoria she worked in the Baptist Good Will Center. Later, in Porto Alegre, she organized a Good Will Center and later the Tabernacle Baptist Church of Porto Alegre (now known as Mt. Serat Baptist Church). This church was organized in May of 1936.

Mission Chapels in the Porto Alegre area organized by Miss Bigler:

Signal Baptist Mission, Esteio
Partenon Chapel
Chapel at Mathias Velho
Preaching Point at Villa Elizabeth
Preaching Point at San Jose
Preaching Point at Hamburgo Novo

Later Years:

A concern of Miss Bigler's heart was that she must have missionary help due to her failing health. Rev. and Mrs. James Hawkins, also of Tabernacle, Macon, went to Brazil in 1964 to assist Miss Bigler in Porto Alegre. Later they became affiliated with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and were transferred to other Brazilian mission locations. They now serve in Carazinho, Brazil.

Miss Pearl Bigler returned to Macon in 1965 in retirement. Her failing health improved and she returned to Brazil in 1967. A heart attack on September 1, 1969 at Esteio claimed her life. She was buried in Brazil.

Her words in a final letter: "I've tried to do my best with what has been entrusted to me to use for Him."