

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 2002 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4UCopy.txt file on this CD.

SKETCHES OF AUGUSTUS EDDY
Compiled By Duane V. Maxey

* * * * *

Digital Edition 03/27/2002
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION TO THIS COMPILATION

This compilation consists of two sketches about Augustus Eddy, the first taken from "The Life of Rev. Thomas M. Eddy, D.D" By Charles N. Sims, published in 1879, and the second taken from "The Cyclopedia of Methodism" by Bishop Matthew Simpson.

The volume from which the first sketch Augustus Eddy was taken was purchased with an eye toward digitizing the whole book, which is a biography of Thomas Mears Eddy, the son of Augustus Eddy. However, in my judgment, upon examining the book I found the sketch of Augustus Eddy, the subject's father, to contain much more pertaining to real salvation and old-fashioned Methodism than I found throughout the remainder of the biography of his son. Thus, with some regret for having purchased a rather expensive, 392-page volume, most of which I shall not use, I have decided to omit from this digital publication all but the brief sketch of Augustus Eddy.

The second sketch of Augustus Eddy, taken from Bishop Matthew Simpson's Cyclopedia of Methodism, was material already digitized and found on the HDM CD. A scan of the HDM TXT CD revealed that, prior to the introduction of this file into the HDM Library, the name "August Eddy" also appears 6 times in 6 of our CD files. -- DVM

* * * * *

01 -- SKETCH ONE OF AUGUSTUS EDDY

The family of which Thomas M. Eddy came possessed all those essential qualities of vigorous and reliable manhood for which he was marked. His great grandfather Eddy was a New England Quaker preacher, and possessed that delicate and sensitive religious nature which perceived the Spirit's inner light, and heard the words of its guiding voice. He grew strong in the battles with unsubdued nature which must always be fought in a new country, and he possessed the sublime courage of the early New England Friends.

Both of Mr. Eddy's grandfathers were patriot soldiers in the Revolutionary war, and helped, in camp and on the battlefield, to work out, in darkness and storm and blood, the problem of our national existence. Thus did the virtue of patriotism flow into his life from two ancestral streams.

The benign face and manly form of HIS FATHER, AUGUSTUS EDDY, are still well remembered by multitudes, and the echoes of his voice still ring in our ears. His talents were so marked, his work so valuable, and the sphere of his influence so large, as to demand at our hands much more than a passing notice.

AUGUSTUS EDDY was born in the town of Adams, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, on the fifth of October, 1798. When he was only seven years old his father removed with his family to what was then the unbroken wilds of Genesee County, in western New York. The settler's log cabin in the little clearing, the dense and far-reaching forests, the silent streams creeping among the trees, and the broad and beautiful lakes, were the objects familiar to the eyes of his boyhood. Felling the primitive forests, making rails from the trunks of the great trees, rolling together and burning the useless timber, grubbing out the roots and tilling the fields, were his early toils.

His sports were pursuing the bear, the deer, and the wild turkey in the chase, and fishing in the abundantly stocked streams and lakes.

Educational opportunities of every character were scarce and poor. There were few school-houses, and the branches taught during the short winter terms were very rudimentary. Even for these meager opportunities there was little time left the young men in this new country, so constantly were they kept employed in opening the half-cleared farms.

Young Eddy was seventeen years old before he ever saw a copy of an English grammar. The first one that met his eye was loaned him by his teacher, and he began to study it. But the attempt of a backwoods farmer boy to pursue so useless, and, withal, so aristocratic a branch of study, called down upon him the merciless ridicule of his acquaintances and fellow students, and he was compelled, by the force of public sentiment, to abandon it.

This new community was very destitute of every kind of literature. There were few books or papers of any sort in the neighborhood. Even Bibles and Testaments were scarce, and there were few religious privileges within reach. Eddy was tall, muscular, active, genial, the peer of any youth in the neighborhood in athletic and social qualities; it is not surprising that he describes himself as being, at this time of his life, "gay and worldly."

Thus his years passed till he reached the age of nineteen, when the great event occurred which determined the whole course of his after life. In the year 1817 the Methodist minister stationed at Canandaigua began to preach regularly in the neighborhood, and produced a profound impression upon the entire community. After a time young Eddy was induced to hear him on a Sabbath morning. He was so much interested in the sermon that he walked several miles to an afternoon service, where he might hear him again. The preacher was Rev, Benjamin G. Paddock,

who, after the opening services of Scripture reading and prayer, sang, in touching tones, the religious ballad beginning with the words,

"Hearken, ye sprightly, and attend, ye vain ones,"

and then preached an earnest sermon from the text, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Under the sermon Eddy was overwhelmed with a conviction for sin, and though his pride was greatly mortified at the involuntary exposure of his feelings, he says he wept bitterly. The struggle of soul for light and peace, which followed, was long and agonizing. At last, after months of anguish and darkness, the evidence of his acceptance with God came sweetly and clearly to his heart. He says:

"I trusted for present salvation, and, glory to God! he sent it to my soul. These words seemed inspoken to my heart: Your sins are pardoned, and you shall yet bear witness of my goodness to many people that are now far from you. I started home, telling all my friends and acquaintances, as I met them, 'What a dear Saviour I had found.' Some were affected to tears, others mocked, while I believe the general impression was that I was crazed. My dear mother was deeply affected at my experience, and never rested till she, too, found the 'pearl of great price.'"

Soon after this we find him, in great embarrassment, conducting a neighborhood social meeting, with singing, prayer, and exhortation. No wonder he was embarrassed. He was only nineteen years old, and was not yet a member of the Church. The event of his uniting with the Church occurred some time later, and he thus graphically describes it:--

"At the close of the sermon the minister, Mr. Paddock, invited persons who desired to do so to join the Church. So much I heard, and nothing more; an overwhelming fear was upon me that I should be rejected. I rose up in the midst of the congregation and said, 'Mr. Paddock, will you take me?' and then sank back into my seat. The preacher pressed his way through the crowd, laid his hands upon my head, blessed me in the name of the Lord, and bade me welcome to the Church. O, what a delicious moment! I seemed to be in a new world; I wept, I praised God, I thanked his people for receiving me into the fold."

Some months later we find him, now just twenty years of age, in company with two other young men, one of them his class-leader, setting out from home in search of his fortune. They were going to the far West, a locality to which western Ohio answered at that time. They hired a light wagon, in which their worldly effects were conveyed over the mountains to Oil Creek, a distance of fifty miles. The young adventurers themselves made the journey on foot. Whatever may have prompted this venture on the part of the others, Mr. Eddy made it from religious considerations. He believed that his spiritual interests required him to get away from his early associations.

They descended the river in a flat-boat till they reached Franklin, Pennsylvania. Here they constructed for themselves a large, rude yawl, in which they continued their voyage, descending the Allegheny River to the Ohio. True to their Christian principles, they tied up their boat on Saturday evening, and spent the Sabbath at Steubenville, where they attended public worship. The voyage was resumed on Monday morning, and continued till they reached Cincinnati. Here Mr. Eddy parted from his young friends, and began life for himself. Near the city he found employment in a harvest-field, and engaged in this hard labor under the hot suns of July and August, till he was

prostrated by severe illness. After his recovery he secured a school, and entered upon the work of a teacher. It may well be believed that a youth of twenty, whose educational opportunities had been confined to the training given in the log school-house of a frontier settlement, where public sentiment among the young people forbade the study of English grammar, would find his acquirements scarcely sufficient for properly conducting an important school. But Mr. Eddy's courage and energy were equal to the occasion. He would diligently study, and fully master, at night, the lessons in the more advanced branches which he was compelled to teach the next day. He thus kept ahead of his scholars, and maintained a good reputation as a teacher. Deprived, as he had been, of the opportunities of college or academy, and compelled to acquire his education without the assistance of teachers, he here learned the vitally important lesson of self-help, and trained his mental faculties to that attention, concentration, and continuity of effort which constitute so important a part of all thorough intellectual discipline. This habit of close and careful mental application he retained to the end of his long and useful life.

But his conversion had too profoundly penetrated and permeated his whole being to permit him to be idle in the great matters of religious labor. Taking advantage of his relation to his scholars, he constantly endeavored to lead them to Christ. As might have been anticipated, these efforts aroused opposition in many quarters, and the young teacher found himself the object of much dislike, opposition, and ridicule in the little community.

Meanwhile he continually heard the voice of God calling him to the holy work of the ministry. His tastes and inclinations all pressed him in other directions. Besides this, he was exceedingly timid about exercising his gifts in public. Thus the conflict with himself was stormy and varied. After months of suffering from this restless and unsettled state of mind, he so far yielded to his convictions of duty as to accept the license of an exhorter in the Methodist Episcopal Church. This was in July, 1819, when he was not quite twenty-one years old.

During the following winter, having changed his locality, he taught school near Batavia, about twenty miles east of Cincinnati. Here the social influences around him were far more favorable and helpful. He found kind and judicious Christian friends and advisers, and a much more attractive field for religious work.

He had intended at this time to apply for license to preach, and for admission into the Ohio Conference. But his conflict with himself was not yet nearly ended. Whenever he attempted to exhort or speak in public, his timidity would rob him of his self-possession, and he would stammer so badly as to cause him great mortification. Under the depressing influences of this infirmity he abandoned, as he supposed forever, his purpose of entering the regular work of the ministry, and on the 25th of May, 1820, was married to Miss Martha Thomas, with whom he lived and labored for almost fifty years. This was one of those marriages made in heaven. Their long life together was mutually helpful, always happy, and she still survives to bless with her companionship their children and grandchildren.

He removed with his young wife into Greene County, near Xenia, where, in the summer of 1821, after much hesitation and mental anxiety, he received license as a local preacher. The old conflict with duty was revived, and he determined to compromise the matter by staying out of the regular ministry, and being very faithful in his local relation.

He held many meetings, talked the best he could, and wondered at the numbers that attended the services he conducted. A good Brother L., a minister whose advice he sought, told him frankly he did not think it possible for him ever to become a useful preacher. This plain and candid advice, however, did not so much depress him as did that given by another brother. There was on the circuit a local preacher of such feeble and unacceptable gifts that it was impossible for him ever to get an audience of his own; so he often accompanied Mr. Eddy to his appointments, and was thus able to inflict himself on the public. Having heard of the timidity of his friend, he took occasion to say to him one day, "Don't be discouraged, Brother Eddy, no matter what they say to you. When I began many people told me that I could never make a preacher, but I didn't mind 'em, but just went ahead." Under this kindly-meant counsel his heart sank within him. He feared he was making the same mistake.

The presiding elder of the district was that wonderful and entrancing preacher, John Strange, a man of whose peerless powers of song and almost superhuman gifts of eloquence the fathers yet boast, while many a tradition of his wonderful efforts still lingers where he labored; a man of one work, of whom the story is told that some admiring friends, knowing his poverty in worldly goods and his inattention to temporal gains, once purchased, and gave him as a present, eighty acres of land. Mr. Strange received the gift gratefully, but after keeping the deed for several weeks, he brought it back to the donors, and begged that he might be allowed to return it. While he held it, he had tried to sing, as in former times, the hymn containing the lines--

"No foot of land do I possess;
No cottage in this wilderness:
A poor wayfaring man."

But the charm which his personal experience of earthly homelessness had lent to the song was gone, and he preferred giving up the land to losing the glory of the hymn.

This other-worldly man had obtained, with much difficulty, Mr. Eddy's consent to take a recommendation for admission to Conference, but, after his usual vacillating course in those years, the consent was withdrawn.

Not long after this his entire family -- himself, wife, and two little children -- were taken very ill. He looked upon this as a rebuke from the heavenly Father, and determined to evade duty no longer.

While in this state of mind and health the elder called to see him, and, after giving him kind and faithful admonition, pointing out to him the wrong of resisting the call of duty, took him by the hand and said cheerily: "Make haste and get well, Brother Eddy; I have work for you over the river, on Miami Circuit, and the sooner you get to it the better."

Thus did the providence of God thrust out the father into the itinerant ministry while Thomas was still a babe in the cradle. It is not our purpose to trace in detail the history of his life and work as a traveling preacher. For forty-six years he was a faithful and efficient minister of the Lord Jesus, enduring hardship, exposure, sickness, and financial loss for the sake of the Master.

In August, 1824, he was recommended for admission into the traveling connection, and was the same autumn received on trial by the Ohio Conference, at its session held in Zanesville. Here began that long and unbroken career of itinerant usefulness extending over a period of nearly half a century, without a blot on his record or a change in his Conference relation, till he was called from labor to his great reward. His first appointment was Miami Circuit, and for seven successive years he traveled large and heavy circuits, which required long rides over muddy roads, and almost daily preaching. Parsonages were poor, and without furniture, and he had hardly a field during these first seven years that paid salary enough to meet the actual expenses of living. In 1831 he was made presiding elder of the Scioto District; in 1833 this district was divided, and he was appointed to the half which took the name of the Columbus District. He remained here two years, and in 1835 was stationed in Western Charge, Cincinnati.

In 1836, having been but one year in Cincinnati, he was transferred to the Indiana Conference, and settled his family temporarily on a farm in Rush County. Leaving his wife, her two brothers, and his two sons, in charge of the farm interests, he devoted himself wholly to his ministerial work. He was pastor of the one charge then in Indianapolis, presiding elder of the Indianapolis and Whitewater Districts, station preacher at Wesley Chapel in the city of Madison, elder of the Madison District, and pastor of the Lawrenceburgh Station.

He was a delegate to the General Conference which met at Baltimore, in 1840, and to that which held its session in New York city, in 1844. This latter election afforded him his first opportunity to revisit the scenes and home of his boyhood since he had left them, twenty-six years before. In all that time he had not met one of his father's family. Having reached a point within five miles of his old home by cars, he set out on foot to complete the journey. After walking a mile a passing peddler took him in his wagon, and carried him to the home of his brother-in-law, Mr. Timothy Allen. His sister, Mrs. Allen, was sick, and her husband away from home. He tells the story of this meeting and of his visit to his mother:--

"I entered my sister's sick room without ceremony, being a good deal excited, and said, as coolly as possible, 'Good morning, madame.' She turned her pale face toward me and said, 'How does thee do?' (She was a Quakeress.) 'I believe you don't know me?' She said 'No;' but after a while she guessed who I was, and we had a sweet interview. I learned from her that my sister next older than myself had been dead more than a year, yet no one had informed me of the event. She had died shouting the praises of God, though a Quakeress. I did not find my mother here, as I had expected, but learned that she was at my younger sister's, about eighteen miles away. Mr. Allen sent me there next day in his carriage, and a little before noon we came in sight of the house where I expected to see her. I had been gone so long, and had changed so much, that I thought no one would know me. I had left home, a tall, lank youth of nineteen, weighing one hundred and thirty pounds; now I was a man of forty-five, weighing two hundred and twenty pounds. But as I entered the door my sister uttered a little cry, and exclaiming, 'You ARE my brother,' clasped me in her arms. Her little girl heard the cry, and running into the next room, where her grandmother was, told her that her mother's brother had come. My mother rushed in, wild with excitement, and folded me to her heart. I was a child again, and felt that loving reverence in my mother's presence that I had felt in the days of my early boyhood. After her first excitement was over she took her seat on the opposite side of the room, and surveyed me from head to foot, with the closest scrutiny. 'Do you

own me for your son, mother?' said I. 'Yes, a mother never forgets her child.' 'But I am changed so, since you saw me, mother; by what do you remember me?' 'By your countenance, your eyes, your smile, and by your HAIR!' I WORE A WIG! I could not recall a trace of her former looks in her appearance, but in a few hours old resemblances reappeared to me, and she looked as familiar as if I had not been absent from her a month. I stayed but a night, and then hurried on."

In 1848 Mr. Eddy was re-transferred to the Ohio Conference, and was most cordially welcomed back by the old friends and associates of his early ministry. He filled appointments in Chillicothe, Hamilton, and Xenia, and was presiding elder of the West Cincinnati District. About this time the old Ohio Conference was divided; and his early associations were so broken up by the division that his heart and thoughts turned longingly to his Indiana home. In the fall of 1855 he was transferred to the North Indiana Conference, where he continued to work actively till the close of his life. After his return to Indiana his fields of labor were Richmond, Indianapolis District, Kokomo, United States Post Chaplain at Indianapolis for four years, Richmond and Anderson Districts.

His last sermon was preached at his quarterly meeting in Greenfield, January 16th, 1870, from the text, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

The scenes and incidents which marked the close of his earthly career were touching and grand, as befitted so noble a character. Though he had been suffering for some days from an attack of erysipelas [An acute disease of the skin and subcutaneous tissue caused by a species of hemolytic streptococcus and marked by localized inflammation and fever. Also called Saint Anthony's fire. -- American Heritage Dictionary] in the right knee, he went to his quarterly meeting at Greenfield, preached twice, and attended to the usual business of the meeting. In spite of medical treatment his knee grew worse, and on Monday he returned to his quiet home at Charlottesville, remarking calmly to his wife, "I think my work is done."

His illness continued for more than three weeks, during which he suffered at times intensely. All his living children were permitted to meet at his bedside. He was calm, peaceful, uncomplaining, and exceedingly careful for the comfort of those about him. On Sabbath morning, the sixth of February, though then very ill, he insisted that his son, Dr. Eddy, should leave his bedside and go to the village church and preach. Urging him, he said, "It is an opportunity to preach the Gospel; you ought not to lose it."

With many words of exhortation to friends, and expressions of personal faith and comfort, and the recitation of many passages of Scripture, he passed the later days of his illness.

At one o'clock on Wednesday morning, owing to alarming symptoms, the entire family were summoned to his room. The lamp was turned low, throwing a subdued light upon the scene. He asked to be raised and supported in his bed. "Now wait a moment," said he, faintly. Then, laying one arm around the neck of his oldest son, Thomas, and placing the other hand upon his head, he said slowly: "The God of your father and the God of your mother, the God of your brothers and sisters, bless you and keep you. The good will of Him who dwelt in the Bush abide upon you and upon your dear wife and children. May your days be multiplied, and your ministry be made abundantly successful; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He

then repeated the benediction upon the head of each member of his family and upon each friend present, varying the form of the blessing only so much as to adapt it to the circumstances of each. The long meter doxology was then sung, and he kept time faintly with his hand to the music; after this, prayer was offered. Again he requested singing. One stanza of the hymn, "My latest sun is sinking fast," was then sung, and as it died away he prompted the one beginning, "I know I am nearing my heavenly home."

After this he requested all present to rise while he attempted to narrate his Christian experience; but his strength failed him, and he was compelled to desist. During the day he sent loving messages to relatives who were not present, and to other friends, especially to the members of his Conference; and at the close of the day, Wednesday, February 9, 1870, Augustus Eddy was taken home. "He had fought a good fight; he had kept the faith."

He was a man of marked character and ability and of fervent and cheerful piety. He was three times elected to a seat in the General Conference, and always possessed in an unusual degree the confidence and affection both of the ministry and the whole Church. He was a man of unusually fine personal appearance, full six feet in height, weighing more than two hundred pounds, and of a most benevolent face. His leading characteristics were, conscientious devotion to his work, great warmth of affection, and a happy cheerfulness that often bubbled over in genial humor. From middle manhood he wore a wig. One of the good sisters of the district thought he could not be guilty of so much pride, and deception, and determined to find out the truth. Preparing her dinner, the elder was invited to her house at the next quarterly meeting. When all the guests were seated at table she bluntly propounded the subject of her anxiety.

"Brother Eddy, I want to know if that is your own hair on your head?"

"Yes, indeed, sister," was the prompt response, "It is all my own. I bought it with my own money, and paid a high price for it at that." The answer was explicit, if not wholly satisfactory.

Great tenderness of heart was a prominent trait of his character. The writer remembers, when a boy, being at a camp-meeting in the hills of Franklin County, Indiana, when Father Eddy was on the stand and about to preach. Some one in the congregation began singing a then popular song containing these lines,

"Shed not a tear o'er your friend's early bier,
When I am gone -- I am gone;
Smile when the slow-tolling bell you shall hear,
When I am gone -- I am gone."

The people were joining heartily in the singing when Father Eddy arose, came to the front of the stand, and, lifting his hand in forbidding gesture said, "Stop; sing no such soulless sentiment as that. Jesus wept over his friend Lazarus, and I would have my friends sorrow for me when I am gone, as I weep for my dear ones who have been taken away." The song was heard no more during that camp-meeting.

He cherished, with peculiar sacredness, the memory of his deceased brethren in the ministry. On one occasion the memorial service of his Conference was being hurried through for want of time and by the pressure of other business. He rose to his feet and said, "Mr. President and brethren, let us not hurry here. This is the last time these names will ever be called in our Conference. There can be no more valuable use of our time than pausing to pay fitting and respectful tribute to the memory of these departed brethren. When I fall I hope my brethren will not be too busy to give a few moments to my memory, and I trust we will be equally mindful of these who are gone from among us." The hush and pause which followed showed the quick response awakened by his earnest and loving words.

He never grew old in spirit. A friend of progress and of all the aggressive movements in the Church which promised increased efficiency, he was happy in his work, and full of hope for the future.

During his post chaplaincy in Indianapolis his daily visits to the soldiers were hailed by them as delights and blessings. His influence over them was like a charm. At his approach the rough word and unseemly jest ceased, as before the coming of a good angel. The men gathered about him like children around a venerated father, But the work did not suit him. He felt that it was not a full response on his part to the call of the Saviour, "Go, preach my Gospel." Many will remember his address in Conference at that session when he returned from the chaplaincy to the regular work. He was wearing the regulation uniform of his office. When his name was called on the passage of his character, and the usual response, "Nothing against him," had been made, he rose and said: "I am not sure but I have something against myself. I am afraid I am not spending my time to the best advantage, and I am anxious for the day to come when I shall lay aside this uniform, which is, in a measure, distasteful to me, and take my orders direct again from the authorities of the Church in the army of the Lord Jesus Christ." A man without reproach, of noble character, single purpose, and great piety, he did his work well, and left behind him a blessed memory.

Such was the father of him whose life we sketch in the following pages.

* * * * *

02 -- SKETCH TWO OF AUGUSTUS EDDY

Augustus Eddy, an eminent preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was born in Massachusetts, Oct. 5, 1798, and died at Anderson, Ind., Feb. 9, 1870. He was converted in Western New York, under the preaching of the Rev. B. G. Paddock, in 1817, and joined the church. In 1818, he walked, with three other persons, to Franklin, Pa., where the young men made a boat with which they went down the river to Cincinnati. Here Mr. Eddy engaged in teaching, was licensed to preach near Xenia, O., in 1821, and joined the Ohio Conference in 1824. He traveled large circuits till 1831, when he was appointed to the Scioto district. He afterwards labored upon the Columbus district as presiding elder and in Cincinnati, till 1836, when he was transferred to the Indiana Conference.

After filling a number of important appointments in Indiana he was transferred to the Ohio Conference in 1848, where he was appointed at different times to Chillicothe, Hamilton, Xenia,

and the West Cincinnati district. He was transferred to the North Indiana Conference in 1855, where he served as presiding elder of the Richmond district, post-chaplain at Indianapolis (four years), and presiding elder of the Richmond and Anderson districts till his death. He was beloved as a man, happy in his family life, genial in society, instructive and entertaining as a preacher, and "kept his heart in sympathy with the live questions of the day." He was a member of the General Conferences in 1836, 1840, and 1844. He was the father of the late Thomas M. Eddy, D.D., missionary secretary.

* * * * *

THE END