

MOUNTAIN SPRINGS METHODIST CHURCH

Churches Of Floyd

Mountain Springs Methodist Now Almost a Century Old

Almost a century now has passed since pioneers of the Mountain Springs Methodist Church held their first religious service, a "bush arbor" meeting.

From this humble beginning came the desire for a building. After several months of planning and much labor, a log structure was erected across the road from where the present building stands. It served a two-fold purpose, being used as a school through the week and as a church on Sundays.

Although the times during the intervening years were anything but prosperous, the community pooled its resources, "prayed much and worked hard" to make the church a success.

Two gifts of land noted on record were granted the church. One from John L. Cook, grandfather of the present pastor, the Rev. John Cook, of Chattanooga, in 1889, and one from Judge Moses Wright in 1890. There was a proviso that "neither part nor parcel shall ever be sold but shall be used continuously for church and burial purposes."

On or about the year 1900, a building known as "Old Shiloh" church was purchased and removed from an Old Summerville Road location to the present site. This building continues to serve.

During the past 15 years, much of the private property in the community has been sold and few members reside near the church. This caused a decrease in attendance, so much so in fact that five years ago the church was dropped from the Methodist Conference as being active.

Soon, services came to a halt and much vandalism took place.

Happily, this situation did not continue for long. Three years later, friends and members began a solicitation of funds. The response was generous and today the building has been remodeled and services are held on the fifth Sundays. Nearly 200 attend. The Rev. Mr. Cook comes from Chattanooga to serve without salary.

Each year on the third Sunday of June, children and descendants of the early families return for homecoming. This year, about 200 were present, some from such places as California, Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee, Alabama, and there was even a visitor from French Morocco.

Names familiar among those attending include Ayers, Allen, Brown Beard, Butler, Bray, Cook, Cooper, Cordle, Duncan, Duke, Fowler, Griffin, Hopkins, Littlejohn, Presley, Parker, Peddykort, Sampson, Trapp, Terrell, Woodall, Youngblood.

Present officers of the church are: D. G. Allen, Will Riley, O. O. Beard, Marvin Beard, John Fowler and Vaughn Terrell.

A special event planned by the church is a barbecue on Labor Day. This will be open to the public and an offering will be taken to meet expenses.

The church is located north of Berry Schools some three miles and may be reached by turning at Pleasant Valley Church North on the "CCC Road" to the top of the mountain where signs will give further directions.

1984

MT. SPRINGS HOMECOMING Sunday, June 17th

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All friends, members, former members and all those with relatives and loved ones buried there are urged to come and help finalize the formation of an independent, non-denominational church on June 17th at the annual Homecoming Services.

Services begin at 11:30. Roy Freeman will bring the message, lunch will be served at noon with singing in the afternoon. Everyone is welcome.
Hwy. 27 North - go past Thoni Service Station, turn left and follow the signs.

Mountain Springs Independent Church, about three miles west of U.S. 27 and about five miles north of Rome on the CC Road, will hold homecoming services Sunday and will elect officers.

Roy Freeman will preach at 11 a.m. A brief business meeting will follow. A covered dish dinner will be served at noon with singing planned for the afternoon.

The church, which holds services on the fifth and third Sundays in June, is about 95 years old.

According to members of its board of trustees, election of officers is vital to the survival of the isolated country church.

Vandals hit

Estelle Carey told Rome police someone vandalized the Civic Center Annex, West Seventh Street, between Friday afternoon and Monday morning.

According to police reports:

Ms. Carey, 12 Mason Lane, said someone broke a window on the west-side of the building between 2 p.m. Friday and 7 a.m. Monday.

The replacement cost of the broken window is estimated at \$100.

John W. Terrell, 717 Ave. A, reported someone broke concrete steps and a chandelier and damaged a piano and windows at the Mountain Springs Church on CCC Road, according to a Floyd County Police Department report.

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A bump in the night...

Once every five Sundays it's used for a church, but when the moon gets full legend has it that...

By NANCY SANCHEZ, News-Tribune Staff Writer

The tree leaves, once full, thick and green, are turning to yellow, gold, and a deep blood red. Bare tree branches grab upward at the barren sky like the boney, crooked fingers of a skeleton's hand. The nights are getting colder, the days shorter and, as the moon waxes to full, darkened shadows are coming to life.

It's time, my friend, for Halloween.

Take a drive down a country dirt road in late afternoon, down the old CCC Road, your car jerking and bumping over ruts and potholes. A creaking gate lies ahead, where broken beer bottles, cardboard containers and a sign warning of stiff penalties to vandals are evidence of a certain kind of goings-on.

Out of your car, your feet follow a pinestraw-covered path where fallen leaves shift in the breeze. Before you, two blackbirds standing in the roadway stare and nod, then suddenly take wing.

The road twists and winds, uphill and down, and rocks and pebbles slip, threatening to tumble you to the ground. Your face is brushed by a spiderweb noticed too late, and it clings to your skin even as you try to pull away.

Ahead is a small churchyard where, some persons' stories claim, witches from the wooded area would congregate, casting evil spells on intruders. And when the leaves shift again, a broken branch falls to the ground and you turn quickly — perhaps it's that man they called the "deer man", sneaking up behind you, that old guy who used to jump out from nowhere to chase the kids who came out to the churchyard.

But no! it's only the leaves...or something.

You cross a tiny bridge under which water lays deathly still. The stark, white church, its doorknob gone and its lead-pipe arm rails crooked and bent, is closed and locked.

A graveyard on the hill solemnly overlooks the scene, and you remember more stories, those from Berry College students who claimed a ghost, restless and lonely, carries a single lantern through the graveyard at night, as if searching for something among the headstones.

Where granite marks the resting place of many, some graves are marked only by aged slabs of unmarked wood. Perhaps he walks, this restless spirit, in search of his own grave.

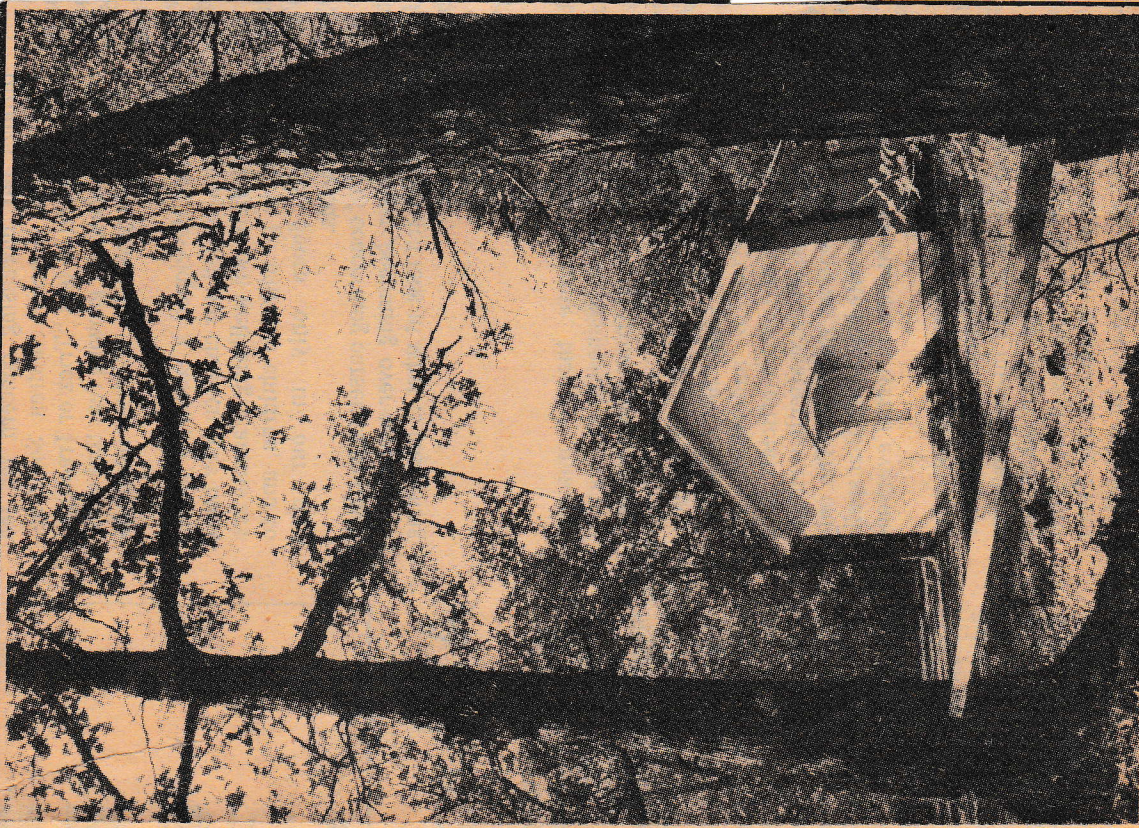
Will this Halloween, this night reputed for wakening of spirits and haunts, be the night the lantern is seen in the graveyard? Is the spirit still there, forever searching?

Across the hill, just beyond the church, an abandoned camping tent still stands, though it leans toward collapse, and the yellow fabric door flaps in the chilling wind. The tent remains, a reminder perhaps, of a would-be hero who staked his reputation on a bet, but found his courage waned in favor of home sweet home.

The church itself is a place of Baptist worship every fifth Sunday, and the small graveyard is the resting place of those someone once called affectionately by name. But for any mind with an active imagination, a plain white building near a graveyard can become a sinister house of who-knows-what. The very image may conjure up all sorts of chilling stories of the supernatural.

The afternoon begins to fade and a cool wind begins to pick up force. The leaves are blown across the path and...something falls from a tree again and...the shadows shift, forming shapes on the ground and on the side of the church.

If something were to happen, it would happen after dark...wouldn't it? So as dusk closes in, you walk back to your car, perhaps a little more swiftly than you might have...if it weren't Halloween.



PERHAPS IT DOES LOOK INNOCENT IN DAYLIGHT, BUT...

41 ARRESTED

Party on church grounds lands 41 students in jail

Authorities broke up a two-keg beer party on the grounds of a Floyd County church and arrested 41 students early Saturday morning, police say.

Floyd County police said 39 Shorter College students, and two Berry College students were arrested shortly after midnight on charges of criminal trespassing for participating in the party on the grounds of Mountain Springs Church, CCC Road.

Police confiscated the kegs and several cans of beer, according to Investigator Nathaniel McClinic, who said the department investigated after receiving a call from a state Game and Fish Commission warden. Police had received complaints of vandalism at the location, earlier.

According to the jail docket:

The students were each charged with criminal trespassing. Bonds were set at \$330 and the students were released on their own recognizance.

Church member John W. Terrell said the congregation will press charges against the students if any damage was done to the property, but he expressed doubts they were responsible for recent acts of vandalism.

Shorter Dean of Student Affairs Madeline Allen had no information on the incident Saturday and said she will look into the matter next week.

Berry College officials were unavailable for comment Saturday evening.

Students to work out keg-party problems

A prosecutor says 41 college students can literally work out their problems with a Floyd County church.

The students were arrested on criminal trespassing charges Oct. 26 for participating in a two-keg beer party on the grounds of Mountain Springs Church, CCC Road, in northern Floyd County, police said.

District Attorney Steve Lanier says if the 39 Shorter College students and two Berry College students complete a pre-trial intervention program, their records will be wiped clean.

He said the youths have been referred to the Georgia Department of Labor, which administers the program.

In the program, the students will be required to participate in 13 weeks of counseling and to perform symbolic restitution, such as community service, and paying a victim fee and court costs, Lanier said.

No court action will be taken against participants, he said, if they

complete the course and aren't arrested on any other charges within a two-year period.

Lanier said the program is designed for nonviolent first offenders. "It gives a first-time offender," he said, "a chance to correct a problem without having a blemish on his or her record."

George L. Ballentine, Shorter College President, said action by the college in the incident depends upon the outcome of the legal process.

He said, however, he wishes the incident had been handled differently.

"The penalties seem to be rather stiff for what they did," he said.

Ballentine said he wishes a program had been worked out within the church involving the students.

But, Ballentine offered no excuses for the student's actions.

He said he just hopes something positive comes out of the case.

"These aren't bad kids," Ballentine said. "They're high-caliber young men and women."

Officials look into beer bust

For Shorter College officials, it's a precedent.

Administrators at the college are still gathering information about a two-keg beer party at a church that led to the arrests of 39 Shorter students, according to a college spokesman.

The mass-arrest, shortly after midnight Friday, is the first in the college's history, said the spokesman, who declined to identify himself.

And, Shorter College officials say they have not determined if they will take any disciplinary action against those students.

The 39 students, along with two Berry College students, were arrested as they participated in the party on the grounds of Mountain Springs Church, CCC Road, in northern Floyd County, according to Floyd County police reports.

The students were charged with criminal trespassing, police said. Bond was set at \$330 each, with the students released on their own recognizance.

Berry officials will take no action against the college's two participants in the party, according to Sandy Biscar, college spokesman.

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JUNE 17
1984



Rome News-Tribune

Comment and Opinion

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THURSDAY, NOV. 21, 1985

A learning experience

WHEN SHORTER COLLEGE students, 39 of them, were caught at a beer party on the grounds of a nearby church, it made news.

Had it been a bunch of students from Georgia Tech, whose "Ramblin' Wreck" song isn't exactly a hymn to sobriety, it would have been ho-hum non-news.

But, Shorter College, on the hill, in Rome, is an institution of the Georgia Baptist Convention, which, to put it mildly, does not appear on television beer commercials.

Shorter College has an outstanding academic reputation. Many parents send their youngsters to school there also because they know of its straight-arrow standards, including shunning drinking.

THE PRESIDENT OF Shorter College is Dr. George Ballentine, as fine an educator — and human being — as is to be found on any American college campus today. The news must have cut him deeply. It was just the kind of thing neither he nor his fine college needed.

But, college-age students will be college-age students, under the most wholesome of environments. The friends of Shorter College are legion, and enough time has elapsed now to judge that most of them (1) are enormously sympathetic and (2) don't think the world has come to an end.

They are understanding and forgiving. So is President Ballentine, it is reassuring — but not surprising — to note.

INSTEAD OF LASHING out at his students, he did what any caring and mature parent would do: He let them know of his displeasure at their offense, but he also let them know he cares deeply for them and still respects them.

There never was a more-regretful group of youngsters, those 39 from Shorter and the two from nearby Berry College. Every last one would give anything if it hadn't happened.

But, what's done was done. And, their immediate response was to ask themselves: What can we do to help make it right?

Out of that correct reaction has come a program of voluntary community service, through which the offending students will perform a variety of good-neighbor acts to the benefit of the church whose grounds they violated.

REGRETTABLE AS IT is, this incident is probably the best thing that could have happened to those youngsters, considering the way they're handling it.

Is this a rotten bunch of kids? On the contrary; they are truly outstanding youngsters — bright, decent, honest and, as their reflective actions prove, genuinely caring.

Have they hurt their college? Of course.

Have they hurt their president? Without question.

Did they hurt the little church? Yes, and it didn't need any more trouble from outsiders.

Did they hurt themselves? More than anyone else.

Are they likely ever to pull a dumb stunt like that again? No, for the lesson has been learned.

IF THAT ISN'T part of growing up, then what is?

And, after all, learning to grow up is a big part of why parents send their kids off to college.

What it all proves is that Shorter College is, indeed, an outstanding place to learn — and to grow up.