

# The Hilltop

PLAIN LIVING AND HIGH THINKING

Published by the Students of Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N. C.

Entered as second-class matter February 20, 1926, at the Postoffice at Mars Hill, North Carolina, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Published semi-monthly during the college year.

Subscription Rate ..... Year \$1.00

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Volume XXV      October 14, 1950      Number 2

## One of Few Log Churches Stands on Campus

By Gene Roberts

Buried deep in the tradition and history of Mars Hill College and the surrounding territory is the little log church located at Locust Grove on the campus road to the boys' dormitories. The church takes its place up on Locust Grove with another historical college shrine, Joe's Memorial.

This little church is one of the few remaining log churches in the eastern section of the United States. Formerly located at Arrington Branch and called the Arrington Baptist Church, it was moved to Mars Hill in 1939, where it could be preserved and recognized as the relic it is. Mars Hill seemed to be the logical place for this church, being the oldest educational institution in continuous operation in the western part of the State.

The church is exceptionally well preserved for its age, which is undetermined, even though it is known that it was constructed during the latter part of the pioneering period of our State. There is no sign of decay in the hand-hewn logs of yellow poplar. The entire structure of the church is believed to be original, with the exception of the shingles and the floor.

### Original Pew

One of the original pews of the church is stored in the maintenance department of the College and will remain there until the church can be restored or another suitable place can be found for it. The pew is small in size and is made of a half-log with peg-legs and a "rived" or hewn board back. It is hoped that duplicates can be made of this pew, if and when a restoration program gets under way.

To get the church moved took much time and effort on the parts of J. A. McLeod, of the College English Department, and Fred Jervis, son of a pioneer school teacher and former president of Mars Hill College, W. A. Jervis. The owners of the land on which the church was located, Mr. and Mrs. Reagan Coates, refused to consider the moving of it for several years because of the sentiment attached. Mr. McLeod's persistence in the matter made Mr. and Mrs. Coates realize that unless some care was taken of the building the timbers would decay. In order to prolong the life of the building, they agreed to turn the building over to the College, but only after they had secured the promise that the building would not be desecrated, but would be re-erected as a shrine and a place of worship. Mr. and Mrs. Coates expressed the wish that it be used as a memorial for pioneer mountain preachers, but nothing ever came of this suggestion.

### Church Is Moved

The campaign for the moving of the church from Arrington to the campus began in a casual way. Mr. Jervis happened to make mention of the church to Mr. McLeod. He stated that certainly some move should be made to restore and gain recognition for this old pioneer church. Mr. McLeod immediately began to work toward the moving of the church to the Mars Hill campus. Together, he and Mr. Jervis made several trips to Arrington Branch to inspect the church and to discuss the movement with the owners. Upon the owners' consent for the removal of the building, Mr. McLeod drew up an agreement in which he promised that no misuse or harm would ever come to the church. In return for the gift of the church, Mars Hill College sent a check to the new Arrington Church as a contribution of Mr. and Mrs. Coates, as they felt to accept any pay.

Mr. Lee Carter, a resident of Mars Hill, and Mr. Bryson Tilson, maintenance head of the College, supervised the actual moving of the church. There was much discussion on the location of the church. There was no room on the main campus for it, and the most historical and one of the most beautiful spots of the campus at that time was Locust Grove. Another factor in the location of the building was that the memorial of Joe, a slave that was sold in payment of an early debt of the College, was located there.

The church now stands on the Mars Hill campus as a tribute to the early Christians of these mountains. Psychologists are telling people to return to religion and

to church activities to solve their mental problems. Perhaps the secret of the heartiness of many of our ancestors was their faith in God.

We at Mars Hill have excellent opportunities to make religion a part of our everyday lives. Perhaps we do not realize it now, but some day we shall. We are somewhat like the Mexicans who did not know of the great store of wealth their country contained until the Spaniard came and took it away. Yes, it's your opportunity. Use it to the improvement of yourself and your fellow men.

—Demouth Blanton.

## Just Ramblin'

Have you noticed how pretty Bailey is now that fall has definitely arrived? The leaves are turning gold and brown, and the whole countryside looks as if it had been sprinkled with confetti. The campus looks right colorful, too, now that those bright wool jackets have been taken out of moth balls. Tom Curtis and Perry Ellis, among others, have been sporting rather loud ones.

This year Mars Hill certainly seems to have her share of short people. Scottie Clark, Carol Richardson, Virginia Harris, Iris Summers, Sara Ellen Swann and Mr. Liles prove the saying: "Dynamite comes in small packages." However, Jean Eustace takes the prize as being the shortest stick of dynamite on campus with only four feet eleven inches.

Is there any poor soul up here who does not like to get mail? Kenneth Byrd would hardly qualify. He regularly receives letters that are suggestively sweet-smelling. Have you ever noticed how Cara Blake's eyes sparkle just after the mail is put up? Cara, what's the recipe?

As you all know, the State of North Carolina is famous for her resorts and summer homes, but have you discovered that the DeShazos, the Sameses and the Marrs have their own new country estates right here in the suburbs of Mars Hill? They are quite proud of them too! Just take a walk up High School Road and look at the new houses.

The presence of so many week-end and Sunday guests on our campus has been the subject of various conversations recently. On Sundays the space in front of Huffman and Stroup becomes a parking lot crowded with cars from all over North Carolina and adjoining states. Florrie Ann Lawton, Helen Manley, Jean Mason, Joyce Hulsey and Bonnie Casey, former Mars Hillians, came down from Furman for the first football game, bringing good wishes from other Mars Hillians there. Gracious, but it was good to see them! The weeks end are beginning to resemble those old-fashioned home-comings.

Running a close second with the love of receiving mail, comes the thrill of reading a hometown newspaper. Joanne Patterson certainly bubbles over when she reads her Tifton edition. Incidentally, those Georgia Crackers and Peaches really do stand up for their State in any and every circumstance—all fifteen of them.

Recently the glee club chartered a bus and made an eventful trip to Rutherfordton to sing in a music festival. Needless to say after the day was over the poor bus resembled a concessions stand after a whoop-hooray football game. On the way to the festival Eddie Gray passed around a whole bagful of apples while Jean Poston and Armeta Rhodes filled up on cookies and potato chips to minimize that dreaded bus sickness. Miss Weaver managed to keep the whole gang under control, however, and all returned safely minus the few P.C.'s who went on to hometowns instead.

It is to be hoped that all you CI's have put away your handkerchiefs now and dried your tears of homesickness. But just in case you haven't, here's a little poem for CI's and CII's alike:

"I wish I was where I ain't;  
But since I ain't where I wish I was,  
I'll stay where I wish I wasn't  
'Till I go where I wish I was,  
But ain't."

### A Hillman's Meditation

Distant mountains  
(amethyst waves of a blue-green sea)  
loom above the night-draped land  
like humps of restless camels,  
sprawled on desert sand,  
about to rise and flee—  
a majestic, mountainous caravan.  
—Larry Power.

### Depths of My Soul

Breathless, I stand  
peering into the dark and secret lakes  
of my soul.  
I discern with awe  
the violent impulses which plunge into its  
depths and sink, hesitatingly, into the  
Realm of Forgotten.  
With wonder, I am aware of the  
tiny and timorous aspirations  
which rise  
from the Kingdom of Hope and  
slowly materialize into Reality.  
—Larry Power.

## What Will We Do?

Elsewhere in this newspaper there is a feature about the little log church located at Locust Grove on the campus road to the boys' dormitories.

That church was placed on Mars Hill campus for the purpose of preserving it for posterity, but it is not being preserved very well. Mr. and Mrs. Coates were promised that no misuse would come to this little church, but it has been misused because it has not been used. Mars Hill is the oldest institution in this part of the country with the oldest log pioneer church on its campus. That quaint little church, that rare gem—is literally rotting down. The tiny church is situated in a beautiful and inspiring spot where the old amphitheatre was, but its surroundings have not been well kept. As a result, no one takes much notice.

Why? Is it because the students and faculty have failed to realize what a masterpiece is located on the campus?

This rarest of all gems could be repaired and still retain its original appearance. The grounds about it could be cleaned up and seats hewn out of logs could be arranged about the church. With its tranquil and serene atmosphere, the church would make a perfect place for meditation when a student feels that he must get away from the humdrum of campus life. Or, it could serve as a meeting place for the different religious organizations here, or perhaps, as a prayer room for those who wish to draw nigh unto God without being disturbed.

Surely, if we are to keep this church as a tribute to the early Christians of these mountains, we should strive to better its conditions.

Think about this.

## Progress and Religion

This is the atomic age. We've heard those words many times since that memorable day in 1945 when the City of Hiroshima was rocked with destruction. "Atom" and "atomic" were strange words to the average man ten years ago. Time has brought many changes and advancements in this world of ours.

Man has made and is still making great strides forward. New inventions, new medical discoveries and new scientific knowledge have vaulted man to greater heights than he ever conceived of reaching before. No longer is man restricted to knowledge of his own community. Today the average man knows as much about world affairs as he does about his own county or state because of the improved methods of communication. The modern automobile is being improved year by year. The rocket ship, which was a dream to our fathers, is a reality today, even though it is still in the experimental stage. We of this day and age have many more conveniences than did our forefathers.

But have we advanced very far beyond the condition of our ancestors? Our ancestors had something that many of us do not have today. They had their religion. Of course we have religion today, but we of the modern age do not make it as much a part of our lives as did most of our ancestors. With all our advancements have come many problems and complications. More people of the modern age have mental and nervous breakdowns than those people who lived before us. Psychologists account for these breakdowns by saying that modern man does not have enough mental relaxation. These same