

Pioneer Church On Plant Property

The Early settlers of the western mountains of North Carolina didn't have much time for church going, but after the harvest every man, woman and child would go to a camp meeting.

The year was 1800 or maybe earlier and folks from a 30 to 40 mile radius came over the mountains to Walnut Grove Preaching Point on the Davidson River. They were Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian, but they all came together and jointly worshipped for three weeks and sometimes longer.

This historic spot is on the Ecusta Paper and Film plant property and was recently commemorated by a marker placed there by the Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church.

Historical research traces the arrival of Benjamin Davidson to this area about 1788. His house, which was probably also on land that is now plant property, was a favorite meeting place for local and traveling preachers.

As Ben's house grew too small to hold the growing number of worshippers, the decision was made to build a church at Walnut Grove Preaching Point. By 1827 the church was up and

was shared by the three major faiths in the area.

This first church building was used until 1855 and then a new church was built close by. Part of the new church stood on the Davidson property but most stood on the property of William Deaver. Deaver was killed in his home a few years later during the Civil War by bush-whackers. His house still stands and you can see it as you drive north out of Brevard.

This new church housed one of the area's first schools, the Davidson River Academy. Many of the area's early leading citizens received their education here.

Over the years members of the Walnut Grove church in left to start other area churches in Mills River, Etowah and Brevard. These were closer to home and closer to their specific faiths. Local Civil War tensions also led to a split in the Walnut Grove membership.

A spark from the school fireplace turned into a blaze that destroyed the building in 1891. A third church building was built on the Walnut Grove property. The Brevard Presbyterian Church was established the same year, which led to a considerable loss of membership for the Davidson River Church. In 1931 these two churches joined to become the Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church. ☺

Ada Allison and retiree Bob Bolt, members of the Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church, were instrumental in the placement of this marker on plant property—the site of area's first church. The church pictured was the last built on this site.



ECUSTA – What's In A Mound and What's In A Name



The famous Cherokee Sequoyah, depicted with his syllabary, which he devised to enable his people to become literate.

Archaeologists and Cherokee Indian linguists have taken a fresh look at our "Ecusta" heritage and have put some of it in a new light.

Back in 1939 when Harry Straus was examining the site for his paper plant, he was impressed by stories of early Indian settlements along the Davidson River, which borders the plant (See "Pioneer Church on Plant Property" in this issue.) Mr. Straus was told that "Ecusta" (I:KUH:SHTA) was the Cherokee's name for the Davidson and that there were numerous Indian settlements along the river. A large mound on the south side of the river and on the plant property was identified as an ancient Indian mound.

Mr. Straus took the word "Ecusta" for the name of his company and gave strict orders not to disturb the "Ecusta Mound" during the building and expansion of the plant.

Recent interest in the "Ecusta Mound" led to an inspection of the

site by David Moore, an archaeologist with the State of North Carolina.

Dave was excited by the prospect of exploring the "Ecusta Mound". Mounds were built by the Cherokee for ceremonial purposes and were often rich in artifacts. The inside of the mound was usually hollowed out and used for ceremonial meetings. The tops of the mounds were often sites for religious buildings.

Unfortunately Dave was disappointed to find that the Ecusta Mound was not man made, but an erosional remnant. Rock underbase made this piece of land resistant to the frequent flooding of the river. Over the years the flood waters washed away the surrounding soil, leaving a mound. Dave's soil probes in and around the mound showed none of the telltail signs of mound building or ceremonial activity.

Dave did confirm that going back to the 14th century up to the American Revolution there were many good

sized Indian villages along the Davidson River. Many artifacts have been found on the plant property, including tools and dishes.

Dave suggested we contact a Cherokee language expert to answer our questions about the precise meaning of the word "Ecusta".

Mr. Robert Bushyhead, who lives on the Cherokee reservation and consults nationwide on the Cherokee language, was our expert.

Mr. Bushyhead suggested the authentic pronunciation of I:KUH:SHTA. He said the word means "moving waters" or "rippling waters". "Ecusta" is not used as a noun but as an adjective describing any flowing body of water.

David Moore is interested in information or artifacts relating to Indian civilization in the Pisgah Forest plant area. Anyone with information or artifacts and interested in helping preserve this history should contact the Olin Public Relations office. ☺

Six Ways To Beat The Odds On Back Injuries

There's an 80 percent chance you will injure your back. Eighty percent of back pain can be traced to lack of exercise. Your odds on avoiding back injury improve considerably if you start now to strengthen and stretch your leg, back and abdominal muscles; watch your posture and use your brain, not your back, when lifting.

The six exercises demonstrated are recommended for developing muscles that will take the pressure off your vulnerable spine. Don't start if you are already hurting. Start slowly. It may take up to eight weeks before you can do all of them. If you have prolonged discomfort, consult your physician.



1. Pelvic tilt — Strengthens abdominal muscles, stretches back muscles and improves posture.
1. Assume starting position; 2. Firmly tighten stomach and buttock muscles, tilting your pelvis as shown. Back should be almost flat against wall; 3. Hold for five counts; 4. Relax; 5. Repeat five times.

If you have prolonged discomfort, consult your physician.



2. Hamstring stretch — To limber the hamstring and lower back muscles.
1. Lie on floor with both knees bent; 2. Slowly extend one leg until you feel a slight stretch and hold it for a count of ten; 3. Repeat five times, then switch legs.



3. Knee to chest raise — Stretches leg and back muscles.
1. Lie on back with knees bent; 2. Raise one bent knee up toward chest as far as it will comfortably go; 3. Return leg to original position; 4. Repeat with other leg; 5. Repeat each leg five times and increase weekly.



4. Half sit-ups — To strengthen abdomen and reduce swayback.
1. Start flat on back with legs drawn up as shown; 2. Slowly raise head, neck and shoulders; 3. Touch knees with hands; 4. Hold for five counts; 5. Slowly return to starting position; 6. Repeat five times.

5. Wall slide — To strengthen upper leg muscles.
1. Do pelvic tilt to press lower back against wall; 2. Move feet out from wall; 3. Bend legs and slide to half sit; 4. Gradually straighten legs keeping lower spine against wall; 5. Repeat five times.



6. Standing stretch — Stretches hamstring and calf muscles on legs.
1. Stand facing wall with toes about two feet from wall; 2. Keep knees straight and hands on wall; 3. Lean forward slowly as far as possible stretching in both calves; 4. Repeat five times and increase weekly.

