Thursday Afternoon, August 13, 1953

mp Meeting Was Major Byerses, Smathers and others. Significance of Mourners' Bench t Of Religious Life Haywood Years Ago

W C MEDFORD (Concluded)

are depicted (or plenty!

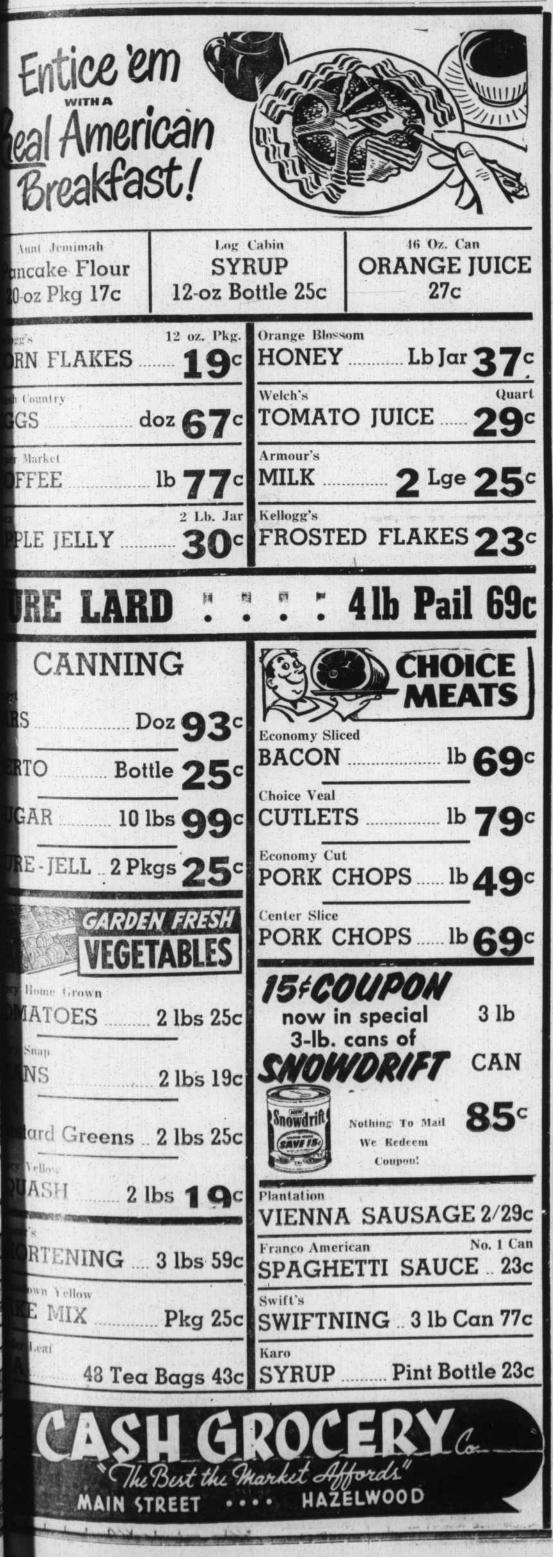
language common is in no spirit of historian is not a duty is to stick to the as possible-and draw their own con-

portrayal of Davis, Riley Ferguson, Preacher as, our read- Towles, Thos, Ferguson, James Murray, Joe McCracken, Davy Mcthat last week e preparations Cracken, William Haynes, Lawson pentance. ese meetings Messer, "Uncle Hosey Mauney, days, hospitality at asions Know-

The mourners' bench played an important and significant part in most of the churches of this entire mountain region of the South for many generations past. Past, we say, because it has now almost disappeared; a few of the so-called ways went prepared-that no one fundamentalist, or old - style should go hungry. They killed churches, still use it. It signified e Note The writer desires beeves, muttons, and chickens; not only an attitude of repentance, on: Wherever baked loaf and biscuit, gingerbread but a resolve to "pray through" to ous meetings, and cake, also brought out jars forgiveness. It was the place ome life, etc. preserves and canned goods a where the penitents or "mourners" were supposed to wrestle Jacoblike until they got heart-felt reli-Of the character, faith and style gion-then to let the church and

of the preachers we also made congregation know it by shouting mention. And the laymen of that If a person who "got through" by his own seeking (or together with day, measured up favorably by the prayers of others in his becomparison. At the Iron Duff camp half) and was not of the demonsground there were such men as: John M. Queen, Sr., Frank M. trative, shouting type, he was supposed to at least be able to stand up, tell the church about it and shake hands, as a sign of his re-

Alley McCracken and others us and with- Eldridge Medford, the Howells on ed to tell a story illustrative of re were the Jonathan Creek, James Crawford, the times: At one of these meetand others, perhaps equally as ings Uncle Bill Haynes went to whom were faithful. At Shook's camp ground: Aunt Adeline Messer and said, Humphrey Haynes, Dave Shook, "Adeline, I want you to pray for Mills Shook, Cansler Haynes, Mark my son, John." do families al- Killian, Preacher Towles, the "Pray for him yourself," she re-



Council, Atlanta, Ga.; Dr. J. A. ABS Field Day cultivation at the Methodist Board Slated August 18 following instructors in the South-

Arrangements are being comwide Leadership School, which pleted for a field day program at ended Thursday, who are remainthe Asheville Stud of the Ameri-

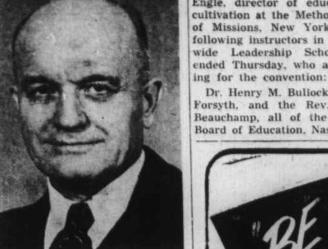
Dr. Henry M. Bullock, Dr. N. F.

can Breeders Service to be held can Breeders Service. Time is also allotted during the on August 18. Any persons who have used artificial breeding, as day for inspection of buils, exhibits well as others who may be inter- and demonstrations. The program ested have been invited to attend. starts at 10.30 a.m. and adjourns

Speakers will include Dr. V. A. shortly after 3:30 p.m. Featured entertainer will be Rice, head of the department of animal husbandry of the University "Panhandle Pete and his one-man band.' of Massachusetts; Prof. George

The ABS barn is located on





THE REV. WALTER TOWNER will be in charge of the 15state convention of Methodist church school superintendents and other officers at Lake Junaluska this weekend, Mr. Towner is director of the Department of General Church School Work at the Methodist Board of Education in Nashville, Tenn.

Delegates Arrive For Conference At Junaluska

are due to register Friday for a 15-state convention of Methodist other officers at the Lake Junaluska summer assembly.

through Sunday, it was announced by the Rev. Walter Towner, Nashville. Tenn., who will be in charge. He is director of the Department of General Church School Work at the Methodist Board of Educa-

In addition to church school superintendents, delegates will include chairmen of local church Commissions on Education, and assistant superintendents for membership cultivation.

Besides the nine southeastern states usually embraced by the assembly program, delegates will come from Indiana, Ohio, Delaware, Illinois and West Virvinia, "The convention will provide an

opportunity for sharing ideas with those working at the same job in the church, and our primary purpose is to help those in attendance to become more effective leaders for Christ and His Church," the Rev. Mr. Towner said.

The faculty leadership will include Prof. James E. Ward of Peabody College, Nashville; Robert G. Mayfield, executive secretary of the Methodist Board of Lay Activities, Chicago: the Rev. James W. Sells. executive secretary of the Metholist Southeastern Jurisdictional

plied. "I've got my own younguns to pray for.'

The Meeting Begins Now, let us imagine that the ting under this old brush arbor

More than 300 men and women church school superintendents and

The conference will continue

about ready to begin, either the 11 o'clock or the "early candlelight" service. The preacher or maybe, the song-leader picks up the old Christian Harmony and "hists" the hymn, perhaps "Among Grace" or "Come Thou Fount-" This is the signal for all outside activity and noise to cease, and for the people to assemble.

We gave you an idea of the kind of messages they delivered in those days and the style or manner of most of the preaching. It was not only usually loud and long, but was also characteristic of the Jonathan Edwards fire and brimstone days. Those were the days when, it is said, God's wrath, rather than Christ's love, was preached and sinners were "shaken over the pit". (But with all this, there was often fine fundamental interpretations of the Scriptures and good, sincere preaching.) Toward the close of the sermon the preacher usually departed from his text altogether-to warn, exhort and to entreat "sinners" to come forward, Then they would often step down from the pulpit and get in the aisle -and now the-

Altar Call Is Made

This was the signal for the workers" to go out into the congregation to "talk to sinners" This was the term used.) In the good meetings often several persons would go up for prayer; and in the "awful meetings" fifteen or twenty at the mourners' bench to gether was not unusual. So it is on this particular night-as we are trying to picture for you an "awful meetin'". An appropriate hymn -like, we'll say, "Nothing But the Blood of Jesus," resounds in this crude "temple of the Lord", the singing and praying all intermingled. Now someone is shouting -now another-Yes, it's the voice of a new convert, and some of the congregation are straining to see

Thus it goes on until near midnight, when the service closes. more because of almost complete exhaustion, perhaps, than anything

At last the meeting closes for the year, and the candidates for baptism are received. Then the crude seats are stacked up for another year-and the hogs and cattle come n and take over in the meantime.

(More on ministers, meetings and churches planned for future rticles-Editor.)

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