



AT MOUNT EBAL — Some of the participants in the annual homecoming observance at historic Mount Ebal Church were (left to right) John Sexton of Fair Grove, president of the Mount Ebal Memorial Association; Mrs. C. L. (Susie Sexton) Kearns of Denton; and the Rev. Edmond

Ridge, who was speaker for the morning service. Mount Ebal, mother church of all Methodist Churches in the Denton area, no longer has a congregation, but the building and grounds are maintained by the Memorial Association.

Annual Homecoming Is Observed at Mount Ebal

By RALPH L. BULLA

Homecoming at Mt. Ebal was held Sunday, June 2, at the site of the old church building, situated in a beautiful wooded setting three miles east of Denton and less than a mile from the Randolph County line.

Services in the old church have long since been discontinued but each year, on the first Sunday in June, the people still come back for the annual service which is conducted by the Mt. Ebal Memorial Association.

Some of those who come back formerly attended the services at the church, the others are descendants of the early members of the church. John Sexton, president of the association, is a great-great-grandson of William Sexton on whose farm the forerunner of the church, Sexton's Schoolhouse, was located in 1861.

Reorganized as the Mt. Ebal Church in 1871, the founders of the church are recognized on a large monument erected on the church grounds. They were William Sexton and wife, Mary Morris, William Morris and wife, Sallie Hicks, Richard Cranford and wife, Emily

Morris, A. Harris Johnson and wife, Elizabeth Kearns, Daniel Sexton and wife, Bashebe Elliott, William Gibson and wife, Martha Thompson.

Also, Leonard Cranford and wife, Bethena Moore, James Sexton and wife, Martha Hopkins, Wash Harris and wife, Eliza Kearns, John C. Morris and wife, Sarah Thompson, Thomas Morris and wife, Rebecca Elliott, Jonathon Tucker and wife, Rinda Haltom, Allen Morris and wife, Jane Bischer, John Thompson and wife, Mary Spence, and Lewis Moore.

The first church building was a log structure which was replaced in 1883 by the present building, a small one-room building with two front doors. The interior of the building is unpainted and constructed of boards, hand-dressed the same as the old wooden pews. Never wired for electricity, a lamp holder is still fastened on one of the walls.

The outside area, containing the cemetery, is well kept and the grass was cleanly mown for the homecoming service. Upkeep of the building, the

grounds and the cemetery is maintained by the memorial association, for which an offering was taken up on Sunday to help pay expenses.

Formerly camp meetings were held on the grounds in an arbor which was lighted by large pine knots which were kept in pillars of stone on the camp grounds. One of these pillars still stands just outside of the present church building.

Reason for discontinuance of services at Mt. Ebal was mainly due to the relocating of roads which formerly led to the meeting grounds. Once five roads converged on the site but after relocation of roads in the area only one small road provided access to the church. After regular services at the church had ceased, many of the people started attending services at the church in Denton. This church formerly suspended the services on the first Sunday in June and the people all came back to Mt. Ebal for the annual homecoming service.

Mt. Ebal was affiliated with the Methodist Protestant denomination and preaching the homecoming sermon on this first Sunday in June was retired minister, Rev. C.E. Ridge, who will be 84 years of age next month. The Rev. Mr. Ridge recalled that his parents brought him to Mt. Ebal when he was just a lad and said, "It was in the old church in 1911 that I met the girl of my dreams," whom he later married and lived with for 56 years before her death.

At the conclusion of the service in the old building, lunch was held, picnic style, on tables placed underneath the shade of a huge oak tree. This concluded the activity until the first Sunday in June next year. The people, after a period of reunion, reminiscence and fellowship, left the old site to its solitude and its isolation until the annual homecoming day in 1975.

Some Reference Books May Be Checked Out

Patrons of Denton Public Library can now check out several reference books for greater convenience to people who need to research but don't have time during library hours. Previously no materials of this type could be taken from the library.

Mrs. Howard Spencer, librarian, said this week that five sets of reference books are available for home research. They are Encyclopedia Britannica, World Book, Encyclopedia Americana, Collier's Encyclopedia, and the New Book

of Knowledge. Volumes from any of these sets may be checked out for one week.

Several new long playing records have been received by the library. Records can be checked out for one week. The new selections include recording by Billie Vaughn, Roberta Flack, Ray Charles, Jesse Crawford, Roger Williams, Smmy Davis, Jr. Diana Ross and the Supremes, and Tom Jones; also Songs from Oklahoma by Richard Rogers and several classical records.