

*Sequentennial issue
of Dispatch - Lexington, N.C.
October 1972*

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Mt Ebal
1972*

Mount Ebal—'Great Influen

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DENTON

Mount Ebal Methodist Church which is located three miles east of Denton, is a church which has made for itself a most unusual history. It has been a church of great influence and usefulness.

The location is beautiful and rather unique and in harmony with the Bible name of so much significance. It has considerable elevation with many great granite boulders protruding from the ground while over the ground are giant oaks typical of the primeval forests. The elevation upon which the church is located overlooks a fertile valley and on to another eminence which compares favorably with Gerizim of old.

Among the various activities of Mt. Ebal the camp meetings hold highest importance in the thought of the people who have known this great old church. At one time there was a great arbor and a large number of camp houses or tents. These tents were filled by families from far and near who came to live on the ground for a season every year. The arbor was to accommodate the great crowd of people who gathered to engage in the services of zealous worshippers of that day. A number of these services were conducted each day and many souls found the Lord under this old arbor.

Pillars of stone were erected about over the grounds upon which were kept fires of huge pine knots. By this method light was furnished for the camp grounds. The arbor has disappeared and all the tents have been removed, but the stone fire stands are still remaining. And the church is well-preserved. There is a tract of land of about four acres upon which is a beautiful cemetery which is well-kept. The Denton pastor has supervision and care of the church but there are no longer regular services observed and the membership has been reduced to just a few of the good people who love the old church and are true and loyal.

The losing of the position Mt. Ebal once occupied is to be found in possibly two causes. In the first place Denton has come into existence within a short time and a large number of the influential people who once lived in the vicinity of Mt. Ebal have become citizens of Denton and even a number of the people who remain in the old vicinity have moved their church membership to the Denton church. So, Mt. Ebal is not really dead. It has simply "gone to town." The other cause of the loss of the position this church enjoyed is in the fact that at one time there were five roads that converged at these historic grounds. When road systems were readjusted

and in many instances the old horse and buggy roads were converted into automobile roads it so happened that the roads that led to Mt. Ebal were not those of good fortune to fall into the new system. And now there is only one little road leading into the church over which a vehicle can travel.

Records are not available to give the exact date of the organization of this church. But in a well-kept record of the quarterly conference of the Davidson charge of the Methodist Protestant Church some very interesting figures are found. On October 26, 1861 in the record of quarterly conference held at Chapel Hill Church the name of William Sexton appears as one of the members of that quarterly conference. On the same page the name "Sexton's Meeting House" appears and it was to this point the quarterly conference was invited for the next session.

Through the years after this the name of William Sexton appears as a member of this quarterly conference and the appointment, sometimes "Sexton's Meeting House," sometimes "Sexton's School House" and sometimes just "Sexton's." The last time the appointment of "Sexton's" is found is in the records of the second quarterly conference of April 29, 1871. In the third

quarterly conference held at High Rock, August 5, 1871 the order was that the fourth quarterly conference be held at Mt. Ebal. From this time on "Sexton's" is not found but "Mt. Ebal" is found regularly. It is reasonable to conclude that the work of Mt. Ebal Church had its beginning in a school house which is known to have been located on William Sexton's farm in the year 1861. And in 1871 the work became known as Mt. Ebal. It is reasonably certain that at this time the first church, a log structure was built. Rev. A. J. Laughlin was the pastor. In the year 1883 the old log structure was replaced by the present structure.

A group of members of the early days follow: Mr. and Mrs.

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William Sexton; Mr. and Mrs. William Morris; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Cranford; Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Sexton; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Morris; Mr. and Mrs. William Gibson; Mr. and Mrs. James C. Morris; Mr. and Mrs. Lin Cranford; Mr. and Mrs. James Sexton; Mr. Lewis Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Wash Harris. These are probably a group of members when the first church was built and are thought of as the charter members, but can hardly be thought of as those who began the work in the old Sexton school house in 1861.

At the beginning of Mt. Ebal's activities it became a part of Davidson charge and remained in this relation until 1919 when it became associated with Denton, which association it still

remains.

The following are the pastors who have served the church: J. W. Heath, 1861; Z. C. Lineberry, 1862; James C. Dean, 1863; Z. C. Lineberry, 1864; James C. Dean, 1865; H. W. Peebles, 1866; J. S. Dunn, 1867; F. S. Gladson, 1868; James C. Dean, 1869; A. J. Laughlin, 1870-71; Henry Lewallen, 1872-1875; R. H. Wills, 1876-77; J. S. Dunn, 1878; A. J. Laughlin, 1879; W. C. Hammer, 1880-81; A. W. Lineberry, 1882-1885; W. A. Bunch, 1886-1889; A. W. Lineberry, 1890-91; J. R. Savage, 1892-93; C. A. Pickens, 1894; T. F. McCulloch, 1899; I. I. York, 1900; E. A. Plyer, 1901; J. G. W. Holloway, 1902-1904; J. A. Ledbetter, 1905-1906; Geo. L. Reynolds, 1907; J. H. Hulin, 1908-

1918; B. M. Williams, and H. L. Isley, 1919; D. A. Highfill, 1920; Joel Trogdon, 1921-1924; O. C. Loy, 1925; J. Elwood Carroll and T. Glenn Madison (jointly), 1926; M. C. Henderson, 1927; E. A. Bingham, 1928-1930; J. Robt. Short, 1931-1933; J. T. Bowman, 1934-1937; Geo. L. Curry, 1938-39.

Two Methodist ministers, Rev. J. D. Cranford and Rev. W. B. Thompson, now successful pastors, have gone out from families of this church.

The first Sunday in June is the regular appointed date for the Mt. Ebal homecoming. On this day the Denton church suspends services and moves back to Mt. Ebal. This is a great all-day gathering when large numbers of people from far and near come to greet each other and

engage in inspirational programs as nearly as possible like those of the days of old.

At a recent homecoming service the Mt. Ebal Memorial Association was formed, having a president, a vice-president, a secretary and a treasurer. Also a board of trustees and the necessary committees to meet needs and requirements. Any friend of Mt. Ebal Church regardless of church affiliations is entitled to membership.

Mount Ebal Memorial Association Officers are H. H. Sexton, president; Lee Surratt, vice president; Mrs. Lee Surratt, secretary; and Mrs. Glenn Johnson, treasurer.

Trustees are James Thompson, chairman; S. B. Sexton, and H. P. Sexton.