

MT. HERMAN COMMUNITY WAS HOME TO OLD CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN
Sunday, 29 September 2013, pg. A12



Celebrating the new Mt. Herman sign are, from left, County Executive Kim Blaylock; Carol Bradford, assistant archivist; Jerry Phifer; Marline Phifer; Mia Ferrell; Maury Norman, minister at Mt. Herman Cumberland Presbyterian Church; Louise Isom; Waymon E. Isom; Elaine Burton; Joel Upchurch; and Norman Pinkston. Photo by Ty Kernea | Herald-Citizen

PUTNAM COUNTY — In their search for “almost forgotten crossroads ” of Putnam County, the Putnam County Archives has been collecting information from local residents about the Mt. Herman community. The Mt. Herman community is located just south of Stone’s Seminary Rd. on Mt. Herman Rd., five miles from the Putnam County Court House in southeast Putnam County.

Before the Civil War and for several years after the war, Rev. Jesse Hickman, a Cumberland Presbyterian preacher, preached regularly at the homes of different Cumberland Presbyterians in this community. Later, the believers held their worship services at the Old Bridge School House, located near the wooden Falling Water Bridge on the old Cookeville and Sparta Road. Eventually the community erected a large framed building and named it Mt. Herman Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which doubled as a school.

“According to Neil Huddleston, Capt. John Hill donated the land for the Mt. Herman Church/School,” Glenn Jones, Putnam County Archivist, said. “The school started about 1888. His grandmother, Arie Syrenna Bullock — born in 1881 — rode a pony and attended Mt. Herman School. The old timers told Neil that Syrenna’s older brother, Edward Hickman Bullock — born in 1875 — attended a school that predated Mt. Herman. He hasn’t been able to find the name of it.”

Kathleen Bohannon Bullock graduated from the 8th grade at Mt. Herman in 1942. The school was one room and had a pot-bellied stove in the center. Dibrell Boyd was her 6th grade teacher, and Vallie McCormick taught her in the 7th and 8th grades.

Neil Huddleston was in the 4th grade when Mt. Herman held its last school year in 1950 in the original school building. In the summer of 1950, a new school building was built near and just north of the church. It was a replica of the one built at Bohannon. Huddleston attended grades 5-8 in the new Mt. Herman school building.

Mt. Herman School eventually closed about 1955. The church later bought the school building, moved it, and adjoined it to the original church structure.

“Jerry Phifer, a resident of the Mt. Herman community, recalls talking to Sam Mitchell, also from the area,” Jones said. “Sam told him that his great-great-grandmother went to get water at the spring, located across the road in a cane break. She always thought someone was watching her. Her father went with her one day and saw an Indian watching them. He ran off the Indian, who was never seen again.”

The Putnam County Archives thanks Neil Huddleston of Galveston, Texas, for donating the signs for Mt. Herman. These unincorporated signs pinpoint the center of the activities of the entire community.

Those with more information on the history of the Mt. Herman Community or any other local “forgotten” community, or to donate signs for other unincorporated communities in Putnam County, visit the Putnam County Archives at 121 B S. Dixie Ave. or call 520-0042.

*Read more ‘Forgotten Crossroads’ at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>