

PLEASANT GROVE METHODIST CHURCH:

The Pleasant Grove Methodist Church is one of the two oldest Methodist congregations in Putnam County. Its first church building was built in 1832, ten years before the original establishment of Putnam County, and when that section was in Jackson County. The original name of the church and congregation was "Rock Springs Methodist Episcopal Church". The church was organized and its first church building was erected before the division in the Methodist Church over the slavery issue.

The original name, "Rock Methodist Church" was given to it because of a very fine spring flowing from a rock crevice, located a short distance below the first church building. It is reported that this bold and historic spring, for some unknown reason, has now ceased to flow. In pioneer days, it was the unvarying custom to build rural church buildings near a good spring.

Within a few years after the original church building was erected, the name of the church was changed from Rock Springs Church to Pleasant Grove Church, which name it has retained for about 119 years.

Before the original church building was erected, preaching services were conducted in the homes of the pioneer residents of that community.

The land for the Pleasant Grove Church, Camp Ground and school was given by John Boyd and his son, Ephraim L. Boyd. The old deed made by them 121 years ago, now yellow with age, is an interesting instrument. It reads in part, as follows:

"Know all men by these presents that we John and Ephraim L. Boyd, of the County of Jackson and State of Tennessee, in consideration of our desires for the promotion of true and vital Religion and the suppression of vice and immorality and also for divers other good causes and consideration of the said John and E. L. Boyd hereunto moving, have, given, granted, and confirmed and by these presents do give, grant and confirm unto Simon Carlilse, Wesley Carlilse, Isaac E. Ferrell, **Joseph Jared**, Saunder Presley, James Lee, Junior, and William Blackburn, Trustees for the Rock Spring Methodist Episcopal Church, and their successors in office, a certain tract or parcel of land with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging, for the use and benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church in building a meeting house, a school house, opening a Camp Ground and such other buildings and uses as the said trustees and Church devise or direct."

"The said land situate, lying and running as follows, to-wit: On the South side of the Walton Road, directly on the old Lancaster road, about half mile from its junction with the Walton Road, "Beginning on a Black Ash marked "W", running East 24 poles to a Sugar tree marked "W.C." thence North 24 poles to a Dogwood marked I. D. Thence West 24 poles to a Mulberry marked "W.B." Thence South 24 poles to the beginning."

"To have, hold and enjoy the said land as afore prescribed we bind ourselves, heirs &c to warrant and defend from all persons claiming under us, our heirs, Executors or administrators. In testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hands and affixed our seals this 16th of July A. d. 1832, and 57th of American Independence.

John Boyd, (Seal)

Ephraim L. Boyd (Seal)

I have included the description of the tract of land conveyed for the purpose of calling attention to certain historical significance connected with it. It will be observed that the then public road which led from the Walton Road down into the head of Rock Spring Valley, by Pleasant Grove Church, was known as the "Old Lancaster Road." It was one of the oldest public roads in the Western section of the County, but several years ago the point where it left the Walton Road and started down into the head of Rock Spring Valley was changed to the point known as the "Low Gap" about a mile West of the original point of intersection.

Several years ago, the Pleasant Grove congregation decided to move its church building out of the valley to a site on the Nashville highway, on the ridge, only a short distance from the original Pleasant Grove church site, which was done. In a few years thereafter, the large frame Church building was replaced by a modern brick church building. One of the best rural church buildings in Putnam County.

Pleasant Grove Church, at its original location in the head of Rock Spring Valley, in a beautiful beech grove, was, for about a hundred years, the community center of the surrounding country and its memory in cherished by a host of Putnam Countians. There should be a suitably inscribed stone marker placed on the site of that historic old original church building.

From early pioneer days until the Civil War, the annual camp meetings at the old Pleasant Grove Church camp grounds were attended by thousand of people. Many families from a distance camped on the camp grounds the entire two weeks of the annual camp meetings, bringing provision and stock feed with them.

From pioneer days until several years after the Civil War, school was taught regularly at the old Pleasant Grove Church. For several years and until the outbreak of the Civil War, John Boyd Vance, a college graduate and a young man of splendid ability, taught school and volunteered as a soldier in the first Confederate Company of Putnam County to enter service, and upon the promotion of Capt. H. H. Dillard, the first Captain of the company and served with marked gallantry until he met an heroic death in the bloody battle of Perryville. He was a grandson of John Boyd, who, with one of his sons, gave the land for the Pleasant Grove church, school and campground.

John Boyd, the leading spirit in the founding of the old Pleasant Grove church, school and campground, was a son of William Boyd, a North Carolina soldier of the Revolutionary War, who was detailed, with others, to convey the British soldiers captured in the Battle of Kings Mountain to Savannah, GA, after the Revolutionary War he emigrated first to Anderson County, Tennessee near Kingston, where he died. His son, John Boyd, born in North Carolina December 9, 1777, emigrated with his parents to Anderson , County, Tennessee in his childhood. On December 16, 1801, in Anderson County, Tennessee he married Elizabeth Leath, who was born August 29, 1785 in Shenandoah County, Virginia. Her parents had emigrated to Anderson County, Tennessee, in a few years after their marriage they emigrated from Anderson County to what is now Putnam County, it was then in Jackson County. Moving westward they stopped at the point now known as the Low Gap to feed and rest their teams and John Boyd went down into the valley squirrel hunting and discovered a very fine spring, which so appealed to him that he decided to locate near it. He had brought with him two negro men slaves, given to him by his father. He entered a large tract of rich land in Rock Spring Valley, now in the 11th Civil District of Putnam County, and with the help of his slaves immediately commenced the erection of a large two-story log dwelling house, weather boarded and ceiled throughout with hand-made lumber and exceptionally good farm residence for its day. In this house, John and Elizabeth Boyd reared their large family of fourteen children, seven sons and seven daughters, thirteen of whom lived to marry and rear families or their own. They also reared an orphan nephew.