

Mary Phillips

Those who knew Mrs. L.D. (Mary) Phillips remember her as a quiet, soft-spoken, determined, and godly woman who was an inspiration and Christian example to everyone.

Mary was born and went to school in Dandridge, Tennessee in Jefferson County north of Knoxville. She finished high school in three years, which was standard at the time. After that she attended Agnes Scott College where she graduated with a degree in English. Her cousins, Senator and Mrs. William Lyle sent her to the college. Her first teaching assignment was as a combination English and home economics teacher in Shelbyville, Tennessee. One of her projects for the girls in her classes was to make pajamas for the World War I veterans in the VA hospital.

It was about this time that she met Rev. L. D. Phillips who was a graduate of Princeton Seminary. Their friendship blossomed into love, and they were married soon afterwards. Their first assignment was in a mission church in Camden, Texas. Soon after that the pastor was called by the local presbytery to Sale Creek to pastor our church. He served for several years while Mary gave birth to four sons (David, Roger, Jim, and Bob) and one daughter – Jean. She was pregnant once again in 1937 with twin sons when they died in October of that year. Her grief was further compounded about two weeks later when Reverend Phillips died suddenly, too.

Mary continued to live in the big white house across Patterson Road from the school where she taught elementary grades. She supplemented her income by boarding teachers and supervisors of the peach orchards. She was able to raise all five of her children alone with her meager teacher's salary and the additional income.

One would never know by watching Mary that her life had been visited with terrible grief and tragedy. God miraculously spared all four of her sons who served in the armed forces during World War II. When asked by me if he was injured in any way during his service, her son Roger said, "No, I cut my finger on a can of C-rations one time. Does that count?"

Mrs. Phillips taught until the early 1960's when she retired. Shortly after that she entered the Calsted Home in Chattanooga where she lived for the rest of her life. She enjoyed her stay at the home and was very thankful for all the blessings that God had bestowed upon her. In her last days she tended her flowers and violets and wrote poems and stories about the beauty that she had found in her life. In a comment so characteristic of Mary Phillips, she said, "We've all had some reverses in our lives, but God has been good to us and blessed us in many ways."

Mary Phillips is buried in the Welsh Cemetery next to her husband, Rev. L.D. Phillips and her two infant sons, Dow and Donald.