

The Old Phillips House

One of the oldest houses in Sale Creek sits across from Sale Creek High School, and its past is intertwined with our church and many of the members of the church. No one knows the exact date that the house was first built; however, an 1890 map of Sale Creek shows the house as being used by two doctors – Dr. Columbus E. Downey and Dr. Burk Priddy who died on May 3, 1914 after contracting typhoid from one of his patients.

A very unique, long, sloping roof in front and in back characterized the house. Its clapboard siding with white paint has been its trademark from its construction. From its days as a doctor's office, the house eventually passed into the hands of the school next door that used it as a manual arts building and also as a gymnasium because of its high ceiling.

At the turn of the century the house began to be used by our church for meetings. Services were held there for a number of years until the church began sharing the Welsh Union Church on Wall Street with the Baptists. Alyne List and Katherine Sanders both remembered attending services in that house before going to the Welsh Union church. That continued until 1926 when our own sanctuary was finished and we began meeting in our own building. Up until that time the church had been referred to as the Welsh Union congregation or the Welsh Union Presbyterian. Prior to that it had been loosely called the Sale Creek Presbyterian Church, and as far back as 1880 it had been referred to as the Rock Creek Presbyterian or as "the church (meaning Presbyterian) at Rock Creek." Sale Creek proper was commonly called Rock Creek at that time and Coulterville was more commonly referred to as Sale Creek.

At about the time that our church moved into the current building, Dr. J. McClure Richards lived in the house and had his office there as well. In addition to being the community doctor at the time who delivered all the List family as well as most of the Coulter family of Luther and Florence as well as many of the Downeys and countless others, Dr. Richards also was the designer of the sanctuary.

Several years after Dr. Richards left Sale Creek, the house was used as the manse for the church, and Reverend L.D. Phillips and his wife, Mary, moved in with their family that eventually consisted of four boys and one daughter. After the death of Reverend Phillips in 1937, Mrs. Phillips continued to live there until after she retired from teaching in the late 1960's.

The house passed through several folk's possession over the next few years including Creed McKinney and later Lee Green. Mr. Green found a piece of paper one day that contained the following poem about the house. Mrs. Mary Phillips, who enjoyed writing poetry and raising flowers while she lived there, had written the poem.

This Old House

From this old house the church bells rang
And happy voices praising him sang

Sermons echoed from wall to wall
Proclaiming with zest the gospel call.

Later, this old church was sold
To a doctor in town, we're told
He converted it into a home
And an office in deed
And to it, many came in need.

He helped those who were ill
Sometimes with powder, often with a pill,
Instead of sermons there's childish glee
Here the doctor's children romped, you see.

Years roll by and not by chance
This old house became a manse
Ministers from here uplift the soul
As this old house changes to a spiritual role.

A little bit of heaven was this old house
From it came the Master's call so clear
To answer the call of our Saviour dear.

Written by Mary Phillips, wife of Reverend L.D. Phillips
Found and contributed by Mr. Lee Green to Rex Alexander