

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We are deeply grateful!

Mt. Zion has had a very good 2002 year. In January on a cold, snowy, wintry day we began work on the new addition to our building. At this writing it is almost finished, just a little touch up work. Most of the work was done by members of the church and lots of voluntary help from people of the community with a few jobs contracted. A big 'thank you' to all who gave so much of their time and talents to make this project come about. Most of all we thank God for giving us all these wonderful talents, abilities, and monetary donations to enable us to bring this endeavor to completion. May it be enjoyed by a multitude of people in years to come.

In May 2002, we had our spring Gospel Meeting with Bro. Jack Ray presenting the lessons each night. Two souls were baptized, Adam Eadens and Ellen Lindsey. Our hearts rejoice to see our young people obeying the gospel and accepting Christ as their Savior. Also last year, 2001, several young people obeyed the gospel of Christ during our Vacation Bible School and after; Wesley Davenport, Derrick Sanders, Joe Anderson, Josh Anderson, Ryan Barrick, Seth Hayes, Charles Goad, Amy Goad, and Steve Milam. We had a number of families to place membership.

Our Vacation Bible School for 2002 was very successful with an average of 63 each night. A different speaker each night presented the lesson in the adult class; Bob Raby, Kenny Hart, Gary Hayes, David Eadens, Johnny Kenton.

*A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Matt. 5:14* Mt. Zion Church of Christ, a small country church atop a hill overlooking Barren River, near Greencastle, Kentucky, that "cannot be hid"; literally. On a Wednesday night, July 3, 2002, when we arrived at the building a motor home was parked in our parking lot occupied by a man and woman from Canada and Sweden, respectively. They were invited to join us for services and we learned they were on the way to another state and chose Mt. Zion to park their motor home for the night with our permission, of course. They were asked how they found Mt. Zion and we were told that they had a book with all the churches names and addresses in the United States, therefore, with all the technology of today they had no trouble finding this location.



## **A History of Mt. Zion Church**

A group of Christians met together on October 11, 1852. They became the Church of Christ at Swan Creek. The world was a different place in those days. Millard Fillmore was president of the thirty-eight United States. Napoleon III became Emperor of France. A New York Times newspaper cost one penny. You could attend a New York theater show for fifty cents. The "Uncle Sam" cartoon figure first appeared. Railroad service had just opened between New York City and Chicago. The big inventions of the year were the fire engine, elevator brakes and Smith's Cough Drops. Warren County history was described by Mrs. Nora Young Ferguson in the "History of the Old Green River Union Meeting House at Richardsville. Warren County, Kentucky:.. She said that prior to the 1850s people of all denominations worshipped together at the Green River Union meeting house.

The original record book of the Mt. Zion Church, which is now in the safe keeping of the Kentucky Library Manuscript Department, tells us about the first worship service at Mt. Zion. The first entry read: "A list of names of members who have covenanted with each other and with the Lord to live together in fellowship and in keeping the ordinances of the Lord's House to be known as the Church of Christ at Swan Creek, Warren County, Kentucky, October 11, 1852."

That time the area around the river was called Swan Creek. A letter written by Allen Taylor to the Warren County Court Clerk gave his address as Swan Creek Post Office, Kentucky. The town of Richardsville had not yet been given its' name. Some time later the church took the name Mt. Zion.

The original list of members at Swan Creek included Mr. William Brown. A short history of Swan Creek, written by Charles Davenport said that Mr. William Brown was a business man, a Christian and a Mason. Mr. Brown operated Brown's Lock and Mill which did a flourishing business. The locks and dam had been built around 1845 by James Ford and Thomas Stevens. Mr. Brown used the power of the water rushing over the dam to turn the millstone. The mill house was a 4 1/2 story structure. Brown's Mill served the people north and west of the L&N Railroad in Warren County and had customers from Butler and Edmonson Counties as well. Mr. William Brown was one of the largest land owners in the area. He owned land across the river where his home was located and many acres in the Mt. Zion area including farms now owned by Freda McGinnis, David Eadens and Paul Devore. The William Brown family had worshipped at Green River until they had a "falling out" over a doctrinal issue and decided Greencastle needed its own place of worship and that it would be structurally larger than Green River Union. Therefore, the



building at Mt. Zion was constructed four feet longer than Green River Union. Mr. Brown donated three acres of land to be used for worship and a burying ground. Some of the workmen who constructed the original church house were slaves owned by William Brown. The foundation stones, steps and mounting blocks were quarried from the bluff behind the building where scars from the workmen's tools may still be seen. The building was constructed from yellow poplars that grew on the steep hillsides nearby. The walls and ceiling were plastered with sand from the river which was mixed with hog bristles for binder. There were two sets of doors at each end of the building and two main aisles. There was a low partition in the center of the building between the posts. The ladies sat on the side next to the river and used the doors on that side. The men sat on the opposite side.

Some folks wonder why Mt. Zion Church is "out in the middle of nowhere". In 1852, the Swan Creek area along the Big Barren River was the place to be located. In the days before automobiles and paved highways the river was the way to travel and transport goods to market. In the early days mail arrived at the Greencastle Post Office twice a week by boat. The steamboat provided transportation to the traveler as well as taking crops to market. The down river trip to New Orleans took thirty days. The return trip took longer. It was common for the farmer who went with his produce to New Orleans to either walk back or buy a horse and ride back. Mr. Samuel Goode was a boatman who made over 40 trips to New Orleans and walked back 18 times.

Also located near the river at Greencastle, there was a hotel and saloon, run by Commodore Burchfield, a store, a post office, a blacksmith shop, a school taught by Ben Ellis, and a doctor, S.B. Johnson, M.D.

According to Mr. Charles Davenport, great crowds of people attended the Mount Zion Church. One early preacher was Rev. Levi Morgan. His thirteen children made up the choir.

We have no written record of how the Civil War affected the Church at Mount Zion. It is rumored but not proven that the Union Men worshipped at Riverside while the Confederate men went to Mt. Zion. We do know what a destructive, divisive and devastating time it was for all Kentuckians. Kentucky tried to remain neutral and was desired by both sides. Families, friends and churches were torn apart by that war.

The Mount Zion record book listed 197 members in the year 1883. People might wonder how the membership got to be so big. Daniel Drake described what the Sabbath Day meant to him in the book "Pioneer Life in Kentucky." He said, the worship service was an hour of sunshine, bright, cheerful and delightful. Sunday was a day of rest from farm labor, but there was still stock to be cared for and household chores to perform. Mr. Drake said it was a delight to change from rough, dirty work clothes, scrub himself clean and dress in fresh clean store-bought clothes. Then his family made the slow trip to the meeting house. It was



an opportunity to visit with neighbors. My friend R.T. Pryor has often told me that when she was young, everyone went to church on Sunday morning. There was little public entertainment and no TV in those days, so the worship service was a social event.

## **A View Of Local Events During The 1800's**

### **The Meredith Murder**

Many gravestones in the Mt. Zion Cemetery tell a story. Near the woods is a four foot tall marble monument that marks the grave of David A. Meredith (born Nov. 10, 1866-died Feb. 14, 1897). By his side is the grave of his infant son born 5 months after his father's death. David A. Meredith was 30 years old when he met his untimely death in this manner: Also living in this community was Wm. H. Alford, known as "Wild Bill Alford" and greatly feared by the local residents. The story is told that "Wild Bill" carried his gun with him everywhere he went. On the butt of the gun were carved notches for each man he had killed. Meredith and Alford had an argument. Some say it was about a horse, others remember it being said it was over a tobacco crop. Meredith went to Alford's house and the discussion was held in the yard. As Meredith was leaving, Alford stepped inside his house, reached over the door where his gun was kept and shot Meredith in the back killing him.

Earlier records show a grave in the cemetery for Tennessee Meredith, wife of L.B. Meredith, however that grave could not be located until about 2 years ago when the clearing was done beside the cemetery and the gravestone for Tennessee was uncovered not far from the grave of David. Tennessee and L.B. Meredith may be the parents of David. We do know David A. Meredith was the great-grandfather of our Carolyn Basham.

### **"Aunt Rhody"**

One of the more colorful characters associated with Mt. Zion concerns "Aunt Rhody". Rhoda Edens was born in Carter Co., Tenn. in 1824 and migrated to Warren Co., Ky. in the mid 1840s with other family members. She married Joseph Upton in 1845. They lived in a log cabin at the edge of the bottom on Barren River on land now owned by David Eadens. The homesite can be located by the broken pieces of pottery.

Joe Upton preceded Rhoda in death and was buried at Mt. Zion Cemetery. Rhoda wished to notify relatives at Glenmore of the death. She had no horse, but had a steer named "Star-Bawldy" that she rode about the country. She closed up the cabins so the cats couldn't get in and rode "Star-Bawldy" to Glenmore, a distance of at least eight miles.

The neighbors considered "Aunt Rhody" to be crazy as she rode "Star-Bawldy"