Shady Grove

Shady Grove Methodist Church, Owltown District, Union County, stands on a hill overlooking Notla River with its large cemetery beside it.

A rather unusual thing for this section because only a few Negros ever lived here is the fact that the first grave in this cemetery was that of a Negro.

Shady Grove was one of the first Methodist churches of this section. In the early days when few folks had settled these mountain valleys, the need of a church house became apparent, so some of the men got together, cut trees, hewed the logs, and built the church house. They named it Shady Grove. This took place in the late 1830's. Drury Logan, one of the early settlers, gave the ground and help build the church even before he built his own dwelling. Wilson Stevens bought the Logan property, surrounding the church in 1860, and in 1861, for the first time, the deeds were made to the trustees of the church, with proper disciplinary requirements.

In 1889 the original log building had become unfit for a church building. It was moved a short distance and still stands there, being used as a barn by Mrs. Rom Queen. A frame building was erected. For forty years or more this building served the community, but by that time it was in bad condition. They started out to repair the building but it was in such a poor condition they tore it down. It was a struggle, but a nice new church was built and finally completed in 1936.

In 1948 the church was remodeled. Sunday School rooms were added and a stoop built, and the weather boarding was covered with asbestos shingles. It was finished attractively on the
inside. How it is a very beautiful little church.

It is rather unusual that this building was not built for a school also, but one term was taught in it in 1887.

Another interesting fact is a note pointing out that the Sunday School literature of the early days was the Bible and Webster's Blue Back Speller.

This church contributed to the ministry the Rev. W. T. Hamby, one of the leading ministers of the last generation of the North Georgia Conference. It was in Shady Grove that he preached his first sermon.

The community surrounding Shady Grove is almost solid Methodist. This is the only place in the county that this is true. Shady Grove is a most active and cooperative church. It has a missionary vision far beyond the average church of this area. The members are unusually regular in attendance, and most dependable. One can not help but be impressed by the sincerity of these people in their religious lives, their progressive attitudes, their friendliness, their willingness to work and sacrifice for their church, and their deep love for the church.