

Teacher Daisy Mobley: a woman of unusual talents

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As part of its observance of the new millennium, The Herald Independent is publishing a series of articles about Fairfield County history. We will conclude the observance with a special insert in the Dec. 30 issue.

By John Collins

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Daisy Mobley is a woman of

unusual talents. In her lifetime she has been responsible for the building of a school and the moving of a church.

In the 1930s, in the western part of Fairfield County, the one-room-school system of teaching was still in effect for black children. While the white children of the Blair and Feasterville areas attended school in the consolidated Monticello School at Salem Crossroads, the area's black children attended

one-room schoolhouses scattered throughout the district.

One such building was the meeting hall at the back of the Hassion Hill Baptist Church.

"The school had cracks in the walls two inches wide," Mrs. Mobley states. "In the winter-time it was heated by potbellied heaters and we used kerosene lamps to see by."

Daisy had attended South Carolina State College Extension in Rock Hill after high school to

get a teaching certificate. In 1938, she began her first job at the little school behind Hassion Hill church.

"It actually wasn't a one-room schoolhouse," she said. "I taught 60 students in the ABC class, grades one through three, in the loft of the building. Mrs. Daisy Clark, my fellow teacher, taught grades four through seven in the downstairs portion."

The condition of the school was so poor, Daisy and Mrs. Clark

went to the county to see about the possibility of a new one being built. They were told there was no money available and that they would have to make do with the present school. It was then that the two women, instead of giving up, decided they would raise the money themselves and build their own school. The first step was to buy a new site for the school as there

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was no more room by the church.

Out of their monthly salaries of \$40 each, they bought chickens and fish and made them into shoebox suppers, selling them throughout the community. The boxes were packed with the sandwiches, as well as cakes and pies which the students' parents baked. Each week they also had the children bring ten cents to put in the building fund.

In the midst of the fund drive, Mrs. Mobley's father, Mack Mitchell, suggested that they raise enough money to buy a new site for the church, too. The Hassion Hill church at that time was located on a steep hill across Highway 215 from the present church.

"Every time it rained, streams of water came down the hill and you couldn't get cars to the church," she said.

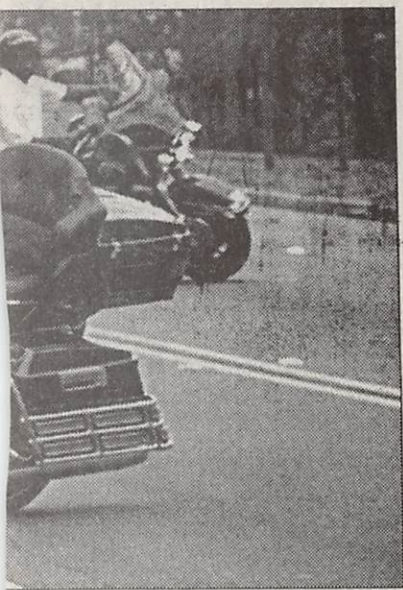
After one term they had raised enough money to buy four acres of land. The price was \$20 an acre. The teachers couldn't buy the land in their names so they had the school's three trustees make the purchase.

Again the women went to the county to see if they would now build the new school. Once again they were turned down. L.V. Mayer, the superintendent of schools, had jurisdiction over the Hassion Hill school. He tried to help the teachers receive a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to build the school, but he was not successful. More fund-raising drives after this were unable to raise enough money to build the school.

Mrs. Mobley taught at the school for another seven years and then was married and moved to New York City, her school still unbuilt. It was not until 1950 that her dream came true and the county built a new one-room school on the land she and Mrs. Clark had worked so hard to buy. Hassion Hill church relocated next to the school in a new cinderblock building.

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Trade



Photo/ROBERT DEFIBAUGH



Photo/ARCHIE CROSSLAND



at the same time. The new school was only in use for four years, at which time the county built the McCrorey-Liston School. The Hession Hill School was deeded to the church.

For years, Daisy worked in New York City at Bloomstein's Department Store as trainer of the cashiers and in the book-keeping department. In 1975, she and her husband Leslie retired and moved back to Blair. She immediately became busy in the affairs of Hession Hill again.

The congregation decided that the church needed a new education building. They called on Daisy to design the addition. She designed the new building, as well as an attractive open vestibule with three arches for the front of the church.

"Our church has come a long way since 1834 when it was just a brush arbor," she said. (A brush arbor is a frame structure made of poles with pine boughs covering the top.)

The Hession Hill Baptist Church is the oldest black Baptist church in Blair. It was named for the two Hessian soldiers who settled in the area after the Revolutionary War. The name was corrupted over time into the present spelling of Hession.

Daisy Mobley leads a busy life since her...

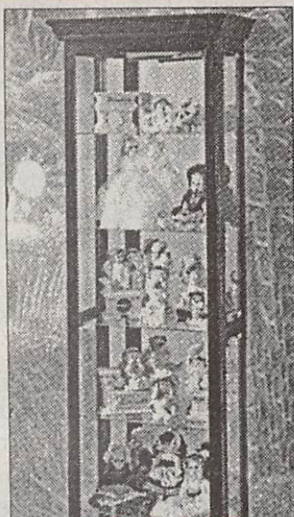
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